



ARDENT PRESS PRESENTS

A New Planet Menaces the Solar System

IS SPACE THE PLACE?



no

Introduction 1

Manifesto of the Committee to Abolish Outer
Space 5

Sam Kriss

The Conquest of Space in the Time of Power 17
Eduardo Rothe

The Space NDN's Star Map 23
Lindsey Catherine Cornum

An Illegalist Space Program in Four Parts 36
anonymous

Mars First! 43
Don LaCoss

Connecting to Place in the Land of the Lost:
Questions for the Nomadic
Wanderers in All of Us 55
Sal Insieme

Our Generation Ships Will Sink 74
Kim Stanley Robinson

Published by Aragorn Moser
Layout by Leona Benton
Printed at "The Compound"
1818 Carleton St. Berkeley, CA 94703-1908

Is Space the Place? No

We have been confused by science fiction. Fiction in general lies to us, persuading us that princesses can be saved, that endings are happy, conflict can be resolved in an hour, and stories end on the last page. This is not the case: stories go on, endings are usually permanent, conflict lingers in confusing and contradictory ways, and princesses... They have their own plans. As for the fiction that is *science* fiction, its particular lie is to convince us that that something totally different is ours for the taking. There need be no transition, no context, no politics, no compromise, just a blink of an eye and we are there. Pure imagination. It is the motivational speaker, the preacher, promising that all we have to do is believe.

There is a huge gap between the fantasy of science fiction and the reality, not just logistical but existential, of traveling to, living at, and making a new home on another planet. There is something both escapist and Marxist about the idea that merely putting ourselves into new material situations will make us different, better people. Instead of playing with the toys that might get our bodies into another gravity well, we would do well for ourselves to confront whether our heads are capable of being elsewhere. How will we keep from replicating the society we live in

now? Is that even on the agenda of companies like Space X or projects like Mars One? Those projects seem to be about toys, reality TV stars, and a strange story about how the Military Industrial Complex owned space travel before it even began.

Precious metal extraction, advanced chemistry, metallurgy, physics, and industrial-scale production are among the ecological tragedies that are necessary to leave the earth. Science fiction has few conversations about how much resource extraction we should (or can) do for fantastic purpose. So few words about fairness, balance, justice, or why (or how) we have created a place so toxic that we feel the need to leave.

Science fiction itself has been known to raise the question of too much information. Fredric Brown's short story "The Weapon" is a case in point. While to speak of this is controversial in a culture that values knowledge as *the* tool of liberation, there is something to be said for embracing limitation. While some argue that extreme power (the power to destroy the world) should only be in the hands of reliable, trustworthy people, as anarchists we know that power corrupts, and one response is to limit the power that any of us have. Pushing the button is not something that should be wrestled with every day: no amount of bureaucratic protection keeps accidents from happening or could save the lives of the people ruined by the

stress of the responsibility. Pushing the button is not something that should be possible.

No one can deny that new places do allow us to think new things, but without confronting and changing the things that make us want to leave *here* in the first place, we will merely be trailing the worst kind of pollution throughout our presumed refuge/escape.

There is an argument that progress has been a story of the consequences of human behavior getting more and more dire, that the terrain of our actions has only gotten bigger and the consequences of our actions only more decisively lethal to more and more life. Will we only stop when we can destroy galaxies? How far can our destructive reach actually get before we pause and look at ourselves?

The answer to the question posed must be obvious to anyone, at this point. Is space the place for our dreams to run free, for our lives to finally gain the kind of significance and leeway that previous generations have taken for granted? No!

Manifesto of the Committee to Abolish Outer Space

There's nothing there already.

We have been lied to, subjected to a cruel and chilly lie, one so vast and total it's no longer fully perceivable but has turned into the unseen substrate of everyday life. It's a *political* lie. They told us that outer space is beautiful.

They showed us nebulae, big pink and blue clouds draped in braids of purple stars, always resolving themselves at the pace of cosmic infinity into genital forms, cocks and cunts light years wide. They superimposed puddle-thin quotes over these pictures, so that the galaxies could speak to you in the depths of your loneliness, whispering from across a trackless infinity that you're so much better than everyone else, because you fucking love science. The words are lies, the colors are lies, the nebulae are lies. These images are collated and pigmented by computers; they're not a scene you could ever see out the porthole of your spaceship. Space isn't even ugly; it isn't anything. It's a dead black void scattered with a few grey rocks, and they crash into each other according to a precise mathematical senselessness until all that's left is dust.

Schopenhauer said that we live in the worst

of all possible worlds. As ever, he thought he was being far more pessimistic than he actually was. If things were any worse than they are, he wrote, the universe would be impossible; it would collapse into a state of total emptiness and decay. In his cheery sun-soaked self-delusion he didn't seem to consider that the world is *not* possible and never was, that this fall into nothing has already happened.

It's now known that our era, the stelliferous era of galaxies and stars and colorful nebulae that don't really exist, is vanishingly short. This whole stupid dance will last for, at most, a few trillion years; it was winding down as soon as it started. After that, after the stars have faded and the planets have all fallen from their orbits, there will only be black holes, and even these will decay over time. For unimaginable eons there will only be a few scattered particles sailing across a total void. If two happen to meet, a single positronium atom might form, float briefly, and decay again, and this single atom might be the first thing to happen in the entire universe for millions of years. This is where we're all headed—in the grand scale of things we're already there—and it will go on for so long that the age of light and warmth and stars and trees and people will seem like a brief flash around the time of the Big Bang. Already, in the short time since Schopenhauer, the entropic rot has spread, the

uniformity, the blanketing, the pollination, the strewing of electronic debris across the void, the people on the moon, the tin-can probes on Mars and Venus and comets.

The Committee to Abolish Outer Space (C.A.O.S.) does not despair at all this. We do not hate outer space, because it's impossible to hate something that doesn't exist. When the universe is already in the process of unmaking itself, when this unmaking of itself is the first condition and the final truth of its unreal existence, abolishing it means something very different from destroying it. Our slogans are short and rousing ("Fuck the moon!"), but we intend to abolish outer space out of love.

* * * *

You can float in gravity, if you know how to navigate the tiny eddies of air, divine the nanocurrents, become as weightless as a dandelion seed. C.A.O.S. travels the world on light summer breezes; this is how we watch our enemies. Some of us burned to nothing in the fires of space-shuttle launch pads, some of us were battered to death trying to wrest Galileo's telescope from his hands. The unluckiest of us were sent to Texas, to spy on the 17th annual convention of the International Mars Society.

What will Mars look like in ten years, fifty, a hundred, five hundred? It's a question that breeds monsters. Maybe domed cities, maybe tidy spa

resorts on the shores of the Hellas basin. Or there could be dark and vast robots there, colossi wreathed in smoke and fire striding across the planet's surface, digging deep scars into the rock with metal jaws, stripping out the useful minerals and burning the rest in an atomic blaze. We might see the streaming furrows of a dust storm on the horizon, while the last colonist gnaws at the bones of her fellow adventurers, driven mad by that tiny dot in the night sky that was once her home. The whole thing might have been blasted into fragments and melted down for slag. Still, the worst outcome might be for Mars to end up looking like the area around Clear Lake, south of Houston, the site of NASA's Johnson Space Center, where our planet faintly touches the blank idiocy of outer space. This is where they held their convention; this is where we flew; this is why we were forced to write this manifesto.

Nobody should be surprised that there's an international conference dedicated to promoting human settlement of Mars. Evil has always been with us. What shocks us is the extent to which this ugly and stupid idea has been absorbed into society, twisting itself into a positive inevitability. Much of the blame for this must go to Robert Zubrin's book *The Case for Mars*. The colonization movement brings together people of all backgrounds, disciplines, and psychoses (one talk at the convention advocated "Marscoin: a crypto-

currency exploring private funding to bootstrap space colonization,” another proposed a spaceship powered by black holes that could reach Mars orbit in 60 minutes and the Andromeda galaxy in 20 hours—but they share this one scripture. Just mentioning Zubrin’s book at a convention panel was enough to prompt spontaneous, raptured applause. Our movement has never had a single founding text, until this manifesto: We despise all singularities. To show why, it’s sadly necessary to read the Bible of our enemies.

It’s a strange and unnerving text. Despite the title, most of the work isn’t so much a case for Mars as a pedantic argument for the feasibility of Zubrin’s own Mars Direct program. Only in the final chapters does something like a reason *why* we should want to go to Mars emerge: Space colonization should be read as an exact analogue to Christopher Columbus’s pillage of the Americas. (Columbus is mentioned four times in the book, Marx only once; this is always a bad sign.) By opening up the Americas to settlement, Columbus created something new and unique called “Western humanist civilization.” Out of stifling feudal ignorance grew a society in which “human life and human rights are held precious beyond price,” a world of restless dynamism where scientific innovation is upheld and every effort is made to improve the quality of life for all.

This society depends for its existence on the

presence of a frontier, a blank homogeneous space to be settled and transformed by the desires and fantasies of an entrepreneurial libidinality, one whose open freedom can't help but transform in turn those settled societies back East. The old frontier has been closed for a long time, and the results are clear to see: "the spread of irrationalism; the banalization of popular culture; the loss of willingness by individuals to take risks, to fend for themselves or think for themselves." Our manly vigor has been sapped, but we can regain it if we take a new lover. We must inseminate Mars.

Already in this argument you can smell the blood and slaughter, feel the slow tugging dispersal that leads to an utterly empty world. Our uniquely enlightened society in which human life is valued beyond measure could only achieve this feat through the free labor of tens of millions of slaves. That blank gaping frontier was, inconveniently, also someone's home; tens of millions more had to be brutally exterminated. Still, Mars is different, Mars is lifeless. (They think. Its underground oceans could hide giant pale sea-monsters, their kindly faces arranged on rotationally symmetrical tentacles; extremophile prokaryotes could form a dispersed consciousness that thinks its slow thoughts in the fading heat of a molten core, that rocky face could open its mouth and howl at the colonists' approach.) But

even if they're right, and even if all of us on Earth represent the Europeans in this farcical historical mimesis, the outlook still doesn't look so great.

Every struggle against oppression is at heart a revulsion toward space. Once the members of our Committee stood on the barricades of cities under siege, framed by smoke and halberds; we died fighting those who would turn homes and communes into empty space. We know that Europe in the period around contact with the Americas wasn't a cloistered prison crying out for a frontier, it was alive with revolt. When Columbus disappeared into the Atlantic, the Spanish throne was struggling to put down a peasant army of the *pagesos de remença*; similar fires were burning all across the continent. It was always a matter of orientation toward the future: Whether we were Cabochiens in Paris or Anabaptists in Münster, our call was for common property and the abolition of class society. Often it worked. By the end of the 15th century, feudalism was dying, while workers, peasants and artisans had higher wages and a higher standard of living than ever before. In response the ruling classes, unable to extract enough of a surplus from the restive peasants to reproduce their society, conquered the Americas.

The vast quantities of precious metals shipped back over the Atlantic were a means of social repression. They overturned the economy,

leading to massive inflation, skyrocketing grain prices, a collapse in real wages that wasn't recovered until the 19th century, an enclosure of common property that has still never been reclaimed, and formed the seed of what would become industrial capitalism. The opening of the American frontier wasn't an opening onto the future but a foreclosing of it, a desperate attempt to save the ruling class that has prevented any significant reorganization of society, prevented any future, right up until the present.

It's a truism that capitalism never solves its problems but only moves them around. Finally it's running out of space. The conditions necessary not only for social but biological life are being eroded. It's running out of minerals; it's running out of value (the amount of debt on the planet now exceeds the total value of everything on Earth). And all this is accompanied by ghastly mocking nebulae and the idea that the greatest possible course of action for humanity is for us to go about *exploring the galaxy*, turning void into value, giving capital an infinite field in which to work its sinister magic.

We should be very afraid. In outer space there is no relation to nature, only antagonism. We think the world is being treated carelessly now; we haven't seen anything yet. As Silvia Federici showed, the process of primitive accumulation took place not only across the

ravaged terrain of the Americas but across the territory of the female body, using technologies of power acquired through colonial conquest. Any new capitalist feeding frenzy will bring with it not only immiseration and slavery but new techniques of discipline, unimaginable today but perhaps not unlike those claws that will drag mineral-rich asteroids into the waiting maws of the machines. Marx wrote that “capital comes dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt.” In the first phase of primitive accumulation it arose as a monster out of the stolen earth. What new tentacled horrors could arrive from the dead blackness of outer space?

* * * *

The Committee to Abolish Outer Space has existed for a long time—possibly forever. The movements we founded over the centuries had different names and different leaders, but all of them were in some way part of our war against the stars. Only now are we making ourselves public—behind frail masks—because the danger is almost upon us. For all our great age and our knowledge of certain secrets, we are not powerful. We are few, and hunted, and scared, but in our weakness we will conquer. C.A.O.S. sets out these five guiding principles:

- 1 Humanity will never colonize Mars, never build moon bases, never rearrange the

asteroids, never build a sphere around the sun.

- 2 There will never be faster-than-light travel.
We will not roam across the galaxy. We will not escape our star.
- 3 Life is probably an entirely unexceptional phenomenon; the universe probably teems with it. We will never make contact. We will never fuck green-skinned alien babes.
- 4 The human race will live and die on this rock, and after we are gone something else will take our place. Maybe it already has, without our even noticing.
- 5 All this is good. This is a good thing.

We have a program, closely guarded through the centuries. At one time it was the hidden book of the Sumerian heresiarchs, later the mystics of Europe were dimly aware of it as the Holy Grail:

- 1 First we will abolish the moon, that smug sack of shit in the sky, our constant condescending stalker. This should be the easiest step: People have set foot on its surface, and come back, and eventually they stopped going there; they realized how utterly dull it is.
- 2 Next we will overthrow the fascist institution of the sun, finally achieving the dream of

all great revolutionary movements in history.

3 We will disestablish the planets, one by one, leaving them to vanish with Pluto into death. We will sweep up the dusty nebulae, plug up the black holes, drink up the Milky Way, tear down the Great Wall brick by brick.

4 Comets, asteroids, space dust, quantum foam: no more.

5 Finally, when our victory is almost complete, we will abolish low earth orbit, the black depths of the oceans, the wildernesses of the poles, the pulsing core of the human psyche.

We said earlier that for us to abolish something does not mean to destroy it. Once the cosmos was thought to be painted on the veil of the firmament, or to be some kind of divine metaphor, a flatness inscribed with thousands of meaningful stories. Since then it's become *outer space*, a grotesque emptiness. Space is a site of desecration, an emptiness in which one moves, and moving into space means closing down any chances for Earth. C.A.O.S. is not interested in setting up limits. We want to create a future, not one of tin cans dodging rocks in a void, but a future for human life. To do this we must abolish outer space with all its

death and idiocy, and return the cosmos to its proper domain, which is mythology, so that when we look up it will be in fear and wonder, and the knowledge that we live in a world that is not possible.

Join us. There's no need to find us; we will find you. One morning you might step outside to find a tiny bird staring at you intently from the shivering bones of a midwinter tree, or a drab curtain of rain creeping slowly from the end of your street. Maybe the bodies on a crowded train will suddenly release the smell of damp cool caves, maybe thin strands of grass will sprout from the cracks in your tile grouting. Maybe, with increasing regularity, you'll start to see our initials on walls and underpasses, not spray-painted, but emerging from the patterns of ripped fliers and mossy stains. Whatever it is, you'll know. In a movement as strange and senseless as the spinning of the stars, you will have been elected to join the Committee to Abolish Outer Space.

Sam Kriss

The Conquest of Space in the Time of Power

1

Science in the service of capital, the commodity and the spectacle is nothing other than capitalized knowledge, fetishism of idea and method, alienated image of human thought. Pseudogreatness of man, its passive knowledge of a mediocre reality is the magical justification of a race of slaves.

2

It has been a long time since the power of knowledge has been transformed into power's knowledge. Contemporary science, experimental heir of the religion of the Middle Ages, fulfills the same functions in relation to the present class society: it compensates for people's everyday stupidity with its eternal specialist intelligence. Science sings in numerals of the grandeur of the human race, but it is in fact nothing other than the organized sum of man's limitations and alienations.

3

Just as industry, which was intended to free people from work through machinery, has so far done nothing but alienate them in the work of the

machines, so science, which was intended to free people historically and rationally from nature, has done nothing but alienate them in an irrational and antihistorical society. Mercenary of separate thought, science works for survival and therefore cannot conceive of life except as a mechanical or moral formula. It does not conceive of man as subject, nor of human thought as action, and it is for this reason that it does not comprehend history as deliberate activity and makes people “patient(s)” in its hospitals.

4

Founded on the essential deceptiveness of its function, science can only lie to itself. Its pretentious mercenaries have preserved from their ancestor priests the taste and need for mystery. A dynamic element in the justification of states, the scientific profession jealously guards the laws of its guild and the “*Machina ex Deo*” secrets that make it a despicable sect. It is hardly surprising, for example, that doctors — those repairmen of labor-power — have illegible handwriting: it is part of the police code of monopolized survival.

5

But if the *historical* and *ideological* identification of science with temporal powers clearly reveals that it is a servant of states, and therefore fools no one, it was not until our own time that the last

separations disappeared between class society and a science that had professed to be neutral and “at the service of humanity.” The present impossibility of scientific research and application without enormous means has effectively placed spectacularly concentrated knowledge in the hands of the ruling powers and has steered it toward statist objectives. There is no longer any science that is not in the service of the economy, the military and ideology. And the science of ideology reveals its other side, the ideology of science.

6

Power, which cannot tolerate a vacuum, has never forgiven the celestial regions for being terrains left open to the imagination. Since the origin of class society the unreal source of separate power has always been placed in the skies. When the state justified itself religiously, heaven was included in the *time* of religion; now that the state wishes to justify itself scientifically, the sky is in the *space* of science. From Galileo to Werner von Braun, it is nothing but a question of state ideology: religion wished to preserve its time, therefore no one was allowed to tamper with its space. Faced with the impossibility of prolonging its time, power must make its space boundless.

7

If the heart transplant is still a crude artisan tech-

nique that does not make people forget science's chemical and nuclear massacres, the "Conquest of the Cosmos" is the greatest spectacular expression of scientific oppression. The space scientist is to the smalltime doctor what Interpol is to the policeman on the beat.

8

The heaven formerly promised by priests in black cassocks is now really being seized by white-uniformed astronauts. Sexless and superbureaucratized neuters, the first men to go beyond the atmosphere are the stars of a spectacle that hangs over our heads day and night, that can conquer temperature and distance, and that oppresses us from above like the cosmic dust of God. As an example of survival in its highest manifestation, the astronauts make an unintentional critique of the Earth: condemned to an orbital trajectory—in order to avoid dying from cold and hunger—they submissively ("for technical reasons") accept the boredom and poverty of being satellites. Inhabitants of an urbanism of necessity in their cabins, prisoners of scientific gadgetry, they exemplify *in vitro* the plight of their contemporaries: in spite of their distance they do not escape the designs of power. Flying billboards, the astronauts float in space or leap about on the moon in order to make people march to the time of work.

9

And if the Christian astronauts of the West and the bureaucratic cosmonauts of the East amuse themselves with metaphysics and secular morals (Gagarin “did not see God”; Borman prayed for the little Earth), it is in obedience to their spatial “assignment,” which must be the essence of their religion; as with Saint-Exupéry, who spoke the lowest imbecilities from high altitudes, but whose essence lay in his threefold role of militarist, patriot and idiot.

10

The conquest of space is part of the planetary hope of an economic system which, saturated with commodities, spectacles, and power, ejaculates into space when it arrives at the end of the noose of its terrestrial contradictions. Functioning as a new “America,” space must serve the states as a new territory for wars and colonies—a new territory to send producer-consumers and thus enable the system to break out of the planet’s limitations. Province of accumulation, space is destined to become an accumulation of provinces—for which laws, treaties and international tribunals already exist. A new Yalta, the dividing of space shows the inability of capitalists and bureaucrats to resolve their antagonisms and struggles here on Earth.

11

But the revolutionary old mole, which is now

gnawing at the foundations of the system, will destroy the barriers that separate science from the general knowledge that will be accessible to everyone when people finally begin making their own history. No more ideas of separate power, no more power of separate ideas. Generalized self-management of the permanent transformation of the world by the masses will make science a basic banality, and no longer a truth of state.

12

Humanity will enter into space to make the universe the playground of the last revolt: the revolt that will go against the limitations imposed by nature. Once the walls have been smashed that now separate people from science, the conquest of space will no longer be an economic or military “promotional” gimmick, but the blossoming of human freedoms and fulfillments, attained by a race of gods. We will not enter into space as employees of an astronautic administration or as “volunteers” of a state project, but as masters without slaves reviewing their domains: the entire universe pillaged for the workers councils.

Eduardo Rothe

This is a direct reprint from Ken Knabb's excellent website
<http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/12.space.htm>

The Space NDN's Star Map

The creation story is a spaceship

The first time I saw a space NDN was in *The 6th World*, a short film by Diné director Nanobah Becker that extends the Diné creation story into outer space, where humanity's future is made possible through ancestral corn crops on Mars. The movie was released in 2012, the same year *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction* was published, the first-ever anthology of its kind. This was the official inauguration of indigenous futurism. The movement is in part about speaking back to the SF genre, which has long used indigenous subjects as the foils to stories of white space explorers hungry to conquer new worlds. Given these continuously re-hashed narratives of “the final frontier,” it is no coincidence that western science fiction developed during a time of imperial and capitalist expansion.

Science/speculative fiction author Nalo Hopkinson, known for her use of creole languages and Caribbean oral stories in her works, writes that people of color engaging with SF “take the meme of colonizing the natives and, from the

experience of the colonizee, critique it, pervert it, fuck with it, with irony, with anger, with humor and also, with love and respect for the genre of science fiction that makes it possible to think about new ways of doing things.” Perhaps because science fiction is so prone to reproducing colonial desires it has become seductive to the “colonizee” who finds pleasure and power in reversing the telescope’s gaze of who is exploring whom. This reversal is no mere trick, though. It is a profound deconstruction of how we imagine time, progress, and who is worthy of the future.

Following in the rocket trails of black authors such as Hopkinson, the space NDN is also in a long tradition of NDN interstellar exploration, using technologies such as creation stories and ceremony as her means of travel. For some, she is a startling and unsettling figure. As Philip Deloria argues in *Indians in Unexpected Places*, settlers are upset and confused when the seemingly contrasting symbolic systems of indigeneity and high-tech modernity are put in dialogue, as demonstrated in the shocked reactions to a 1904 photograph of Geronimo in a Cadillac. This estrangement arises from “a long tradition that has tended to separate Indian people from the contemporary world and from recognition of the possibility of Indian autonomy in the world.” In the colonial imaginary, indigenous life is not only separate from the

present time but also out of place in the future, a time defined by the progress of distinctively western technology. If colonial society cannot accept Geronimo in a Cadillac, it can hardly conceive of him in a space ship.

The Indian in space seeks to feel at home, to undo her perceived strangeness by asking: why can't indigenous peoples also project ourselves among the stars? Might our collective visions of the cosmos forge better relationships here on earth and in the present than colonial visions of a final frontier?

Many of the ideas deemed strange or new-fangled in Western sci-fi come naturally to the space NDN. The all-pervasive "force" or similarly the super brain connecting all beings. The animism and agency of cyborgs, AI systems, and other non-human people. Alternate dimensions and understandings of non-linear time. These are things the space NDN knows intuitively. This is not the future but historical knowledge. The future is reclaiming these technologies not for domination but for new organizations aimed at better worlds. I am reminded of Octavia Butler's words, "There is nothing new under the sun, but there are new suns." Instead of imaging a future in bleak cities made from steel and glass teeming with alienated white masses shuffling under an inescapable electronic glow, indigenous futurists think of earthen space crafts helmed by black and

brown women with advanced knowledge of land, plants, and language.

Indigenous futurism seeks to challenge notions of what constitutes advanced technology and consequently advanced civilizations. As settler colonial governments continue to demand more and more from the Earth, indigenous peoples seek the sovereign space and freedom to heal from these apocalyptic processes. Extractive and exploitative endeavors are just one mark of the settler death drive, which indigenous futurism seeks to overcome by imagining different ways of relating to notions of progress and civilization. Advanced technologies are not finely tuned mechanisms of endless destruction. Advanced technologies should foster and improve human relationships with the non-human world. In many indigenous science fiction tales of the futures, technology is presented as in dialogue with the long traditions of the past, rather than representing the past's overcoming.

In the recent iteration of the constantly repackaged tale of white men planting flags in space, *Interstellar's* all-American space boy Matthew McConaughey stares into the distance and announces, "We are explorers, pioneers, not caretakers." As if one cannot be both an explorer and a caretaker...For the space NDN the two roles are intertwined. The advanced technology of the space NDN does not separate technical from

natural knowledge. Technology is not divorced from or forced upon land but develops in relation to lands and the many beings land supports.

The space NDN's disavowal of western progress makes clear the difference between indigenous futurism and early 20th century forms of futurism, which were compatible with the interests of fascist and oppressive governments. Unlike those futurists, who were in an antagonistic relation with their literary and cultural predecessors, indigenous futurism is centered on bringing traditions to distant, future locations rather than abandoning them as relics. Indigenous futurism does not care for speed so much as sustainability, not so much for progress as balance, and not power but relation.

God is the Red Planet

For many the image of the Indian in space is jarring not just because of the settler perception of indigeneity as antithetical to high tech modernity, but because Indian identity is tied so directly to specific earthly territories. What happens to indigeneity when the indigenous subject is no longer in the location that has defined them? This is not just a question of outer space. Already the majority of Native people in the US and Canada live in cities away from their traditional territories. Of course at one point these places would also have been viewed as indigenous

territories. While many nations have worked very hard to dispel the notion of nomadic Indian tribes, there is a history of movement among many of our peoples. Colonial forms such as reserves, reservations, nation-states and borders have made these traditions of movement nearly impossible. And the need to defend our rights to live on our lands without harassment has created the political necessity of claiming our land-based political and cultural identities.

But land-based does not have to mean landlocked. This insistence on indigenous people having to always be located on or closely connected to one particular area also erases those who are unable to return to their traditional territories, such as Mohawk women who are kicked out of their tribe for marrying non-Mohawk men or Afro-Indigenous people stolen from their lands. There is also the simple fact that NDNS may want to move around. There's an old cliché that every Indian story is about going home. But what about the Indians who can't go home, or simply want to go away? I sometimes describe myself as a diasporic Diné in order to bring the often disparate ideas of indigeneity and movement into closer proximity. Those we consider diasporic are often violently robbed of their indigeneity and those we consider indigenous are often on the move. The space NDN looks into the void and knows still who they are.

Nanobah Becker shot the Mars scenes in *The 6th World* in Monument Valley, one of the sacred territories of the Diné. The red rock canyons and cliffs make a convincing Martian backdrop. They also offer a symbol of dynamic sacredness. These distant lands are connected. Just because the Diné have not lived on Mars since time immemorial, it does not mean our plants and teachings cannot take root there. I am reminded of the time before a ceremony on a college campus when we washed our hands in a drinking fountain. I am reminded of Betonie, the medicine man in Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony*, who makes medicine bundles from trash heaps. I am reminded of pow-wow regalia ornamented with semiconductors. I am reminded of the descendants of slaves telling and re-telling their stories on new, bloody ground. Finding ourselves in new contexts, we are always adapting, always surviving. This is the seed of many indigenous technologies: the ability to continue and sustain ourselves against all odds.

The challenge of the space NDN is how to apply knowledge of the worlds toward non-destructive ends. Any form of travel or exploration comes with the dangers of exploitation and upheaval. Nobody knows this better than the inhabitants of those places constantly divvied up between colonial nation-states. The figure of the space NDN is not an attempt to simply put an

indigenous face on the outer space colonizer. Indigenous futurist narratives try to enact contact differently. Not all encounters with the other must end in conquest, genocide or violence. The space NDN seeks new models of interaction. We do not travel to the distant reaches of space in order to plant our flags or act under the assumption that every planet in our sights is a terra nullius waiting for the first human footprint to mark its surface. Robert Sullivan's poem "Star Waka" captures the complexities of indigenous space travel. Waka is the Maori term for a canoe and Sullivan's epic poem relates the journey of this star waka to outer planets to find new homes for the Maori people. The crew of the ship wonder how their prayers will work in the cold vastness of the stars and how they can approach these distant worlds in a good way. The Indian in space does not abandon their home, their people, or their teachings. Dynamic traditions, themselves a type of advanced technology, help the space NDN to understand how to foster the kind of relationships that make futures possible.

All Our Interstellar Relations

For indigenous futurism, technology is inextricable from the social. Human societies are part of a network of wider relationships with objects, animals, geological formations and so on. To grasp our relationship with the non-human world here

on Earth, we must also extend our understanding of how Earth relates to the entirety of the cosmos. We live on just one among millions of planets, each an intricate and delicate system within a larger, increasing complex structure. For the indigenous futurist endeavor, striving to understand the ever-multiplying connections linking us to the beginning of the universe and its constant expansion also entails unraveling the intricate relations that make up our Earthly existence.

Zainab Amadahy, who identifies as a person of mixed black, Cherokee and European ancestry, grounds her writing practice in illuminating and understanding networks of relationships: “I aspire to write in a way that views possible alternatives through the lens of a relationship framework, where I can demonstrate our connectivity to and interdependence with each other and the rest of our Relations.” Her 1992 novel *The Moons of Palmares* examines the relationships, both harmful and collaborative, between indigenous peoples and descendants of slaves in an outer space setting that merges histories of the Black Atlantic with the colonial frontier. In a provocative bit of plotting, she casts an indigenous character, Major Eaglefeather, as an oppressive foreign force in the lives of an outer space labor population that has shaped its society in remembrance of black slave resistance in North/South America and the Caribbean.

The story follows Major Eaglefeather's decision to reject his ties to the corporate state and support a rebel group of laborers. The name Palmares is taken from a real-world settlement founded by escaped slaves in 17th-century Brazil, which is also known to have incorporated indigenous peoples and some poor, disenfranchised whites. In a chronicle written in the late 17th century, these *quilombos* are described as networks of settlements that lived off the land and were supplemented by raids on the slave plantations where the inhabitants were formerly held. It is said that in Palmares the king was called Gangasuma, a hybrid term meaning "great lord" composed of the Angolan or Bandu word *ganga* and the Tupi word *assu*. The word succinctly captures the mixture of cultures that banded together in Palmares to live together on the margins of a colonialist, slave-holding society. While Palmares was eventually destroyed in a military campaign, it lives on as a legend of slave rebellion and utopian possibility that Amadahy finds well suited for her outer space story about collaborative resistance to state power and harmful resource extraction processes.

Outer space, perhaps because of its appeal to our sense of endless possibility, has become the imaginative site for re-envisioning how black, indigenous and other oppressed people can relate to each other outside of and despite the colonial

gaze. Amadahy's work is crucial for a critical understanding of the space NDN. The space NDN cannot allow him or herself to fall into the patterns of domination and kyriarchy that have for too long prevailed here on Earth as well as speculative narratives of outer space. Afrofuturists have looked to space as the site for black separatism and liberation. If the space NDN is truly committed to being responsible to all our relations, it is imperative for our futurist vision to be in solidarity with and service to our fellow Afrofuturist space travelers. Our collective refusal of colonial progress (namely, our destruction) means we must chart other ways to the future that lead us and other oppressed peoples to the worlds we deserve.

The Moons of Palmares works toward this end by revealing the strong connections between indigenous and black histories, narratives and ways of living. Indigenous futurism is indebted to Afrofuturism: Both forms of futurism explore spaces and times outside the control of colonial powers and white supremacy. These alternative conceptions of time reject the notion that all tradition is regressive by narrating futures intimately connected to the past. SF and specifically the site of outer space give writers and thinkers the imaginative room to envision political and cultural relationships and the future decolonizing movements they might nourish. This focus on re-

lationship, especially as posited by Amadahy, also accounts for those forms of indigeneity that persist among peoples either stolen from their lands or whose lands have been stolen from them.

As the writer Sydette Harry recently posted on Twitter, “Black people are displaced indigenous people.” However, because of the processes of forced relocation and slavery and continuing anti-black racism, black people are often denied claims to indigeneity. There is also a pernicious erasure of black NDNs in America and Canada. In exploring outer space, black authors are also able to assert their own relationship to land both on Earth and in the cosmos. The Black Land Project (BLP), while not an explicitly futurist organization, fosters the kind of relationships to land on Earth that futurist authors and thinkers envision in outer space. In a recent podcast, *Blacktracking through Afrofuturism*, BLP founder and director Mistinguette Smith discusses how walking over the routes of the Underground Railroad brought forth alternate dimensions and understandings of time outside the settler paradigm of ownership. These are aspects of relating to land that the Afrofuturist and the space NDN (identities which can exist in the same person) bring with them on their travels.

This focus on relationship rather than a strict idea of location speaks to the way in which the space NDN can remain secure in their indigenous

identity even while rocketing through dark skies far from their origins. This is not to demean the work of land protectors and defenders who risk serious repercussions for resisting corporate and state encroachment on indigenous territories. The space NDN supports those who are able and choose to remain on the land, while also hoping to broaden understandings of indigeneity outside simple location. Locations of course are never simple. It is the settler who wishes to flatten the relation between place and people by claiming land through ownership. Projecting themselves forward into faraway lands and times, the space NDN reveals the myriad ways of relating to land beyond property.

Lindsey Catherine Cornum

An Illegalist Space Program in Four Parts

science-to learn
communism-to share
nihilism-to begin
anarchism-to be

1. This is the Planet of Sadness.

(Nihilism—To Begin Again, Always.)

Fuck Earth. Industrial capitalism has put shoes on all our feet, and now our toes are permanently fucked up. Look it up. I was born in a domesticated place, at the beginning of the end of American hegemony. I was all tuned up to give an honest try at revolution or liberation or whatever, and then Occupy collapsed into its obvious conclusion. Prison support makes me want to shoot myself, because I can never do enough, I forget things, and I'm just not ready to die for people I haven't met yet. Primitivism is embarrassing. I lived with some people who only wore skins that they tanned, and stole bison meat from Whole Foods. It smelled, and little kids thought they were LARPing. The cops keep shooting people. Perhaps in response, people keep shooting themselves.

I live out of my truck. I am not trying to save the world. The world is constantly trying to save me. The priests of science want to give me pills. Patriarchy wants to get me laid. Racism wants to give me a nice new house in Nairobi, and capital wants to give me a job. It is funny to me that they have all failed. The Earth is covered in humans like ants, and they all drag their ideologies and stupid tribal wars around like trophies. People of every nationality and creed waste their breath trying to push the Earth this way or that way, trying to fake like there is some where to go. They have nothing to push off of, no leverage. Would you like to watch the last forests become toilet paper? Would you like to contact and destroy the last indigenous tribes, to tell them "I'm sorry, but we figured out how to turn pig farts and air into fertilizer, and things got out of hand. Here's some fried chicken and an eviction notice." I'm not trying to take over, save the world, and steal the bacon. I just want to build a new world somewhere else.

I bought a \$7 microscope at Good Will, and a 10X loop with lights on it that make me look like a mad scientist. I've made whiskey. I don't believe that rocket science is more difficult than insurrection. Let's get the fuck out of here as soon as possible. You'd be surprised to learn that hippie dippy shit like ecosystem management actually makes sense when you live in a built environment. Theoretically, at least, it makes a

hell of alot more sense than what they do in the ISS. We can probably make it work.

Are you seriously gonna sit back and let fuckin Elon Musk turn Mars into a reality TV show? Earth is a tiny blue dot covered in troubles, and the endless wild universe isn't responding to state sponsored attempts to communicate. Perhaps aliens don't know what to say when we beam Kim Kardashian and I Love Lucy into their motherships. More importantly, space is SPACE. Distance between you and the cops. Distance between you and the church, the courts, the great failure that is Terran society and all of its stupid gravity. Instead of pounding the pud and waiting to die, why don't we get our shit together and make a break for it?

2. Learn to Direct Your Inner Napoleon (Communism—To Share)

Space exploration seems to cost an incredible amount of money. However, anarchists have some very important advantages over government or corporate attempts to build a new Imperium. For one thing, what government does best is launder money. They pay incredible salaries to idiots just because some dipshit has a friend in the DoJ or whatever. The Apollo missions had the computational power of a student's calculator. It's really just alot of hard work. I'm teaching myself calculus, and hope to shoot an Ipod around

the world sometime in the next couple years. You should join me. It'll be fun.

The other thing is that they really would love it if we left. They'll try to stop us for a little while, but then they'll get it in their head that THE ANARCHISTS ARE LEAVING, and we'll have all the funding we'll ever need. The Pinkertons have been praying for it since the 1890s. That is, if we need funding at all. Maybe we could just tell them we are leaving, and would you please just fuck off while we do our thing? Maybe we'll have to twist some elbows on that one. Either way, we start where we are.

Put down your beer, or crack a new one. Pick up a book about Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and start creating lists of materials necessary to human life on Mars, on the Moon, or in orbit. It is indeed a very long list. There is alot to do. (A space program is the perfect front!)

Call your friends. Who knows how to weld? Who's got the internet connection? Who's got the keys to the biology department? Fuck mink. Liberate the electron microscopes. Who's grows weed? NASA did a study where they measured gas exchange and plant growth given a controlled amount of light, soil, and heat. They only studied corn, soy, wheat, potatoes, tomatoes, and lettuce. If you want kale and avocados up there, you'll have to divert a grow light or two and figure it out yourself.

Tor is great and all, but pirate radio is still using technology from the 80s. Where are the pirate cell towers? Where is the pirate internet? I heard some people in Germany want to launch satellites to give everybody free internet. Better than Google, right? Why don't anarchists build things that anarchists use? (bicycles, vegetables, fireworks, X-Ray spectrometers)...

People recently released from prison need shit to do, a place to live, and a community that supports them as they deal with getting out. We can provide this kind of support by creating spaces that double as labs, storage units, or production facilities for everything from Stirling engines to vermicompost. By starting from nothing, and building up to a gigantic goal, we can direct our hopelessness into something that builds serious counter power in the process. A space program is an excuse to do anything. Who cares if we succeed? At least we blew up the shed, and feel like we learned something!

Do you feel me? This endless TV show sucks. We are steadily salting the only known soil in the universe. We are trapped here with billions of desperate lunatics and megalomaniacal sociopaths. You wanna save the Earth? Leave it. You wanna build a better world? Do it. But not in the shell of the old world. Not even in its shadow. Space is the place, buddy.

Imagine a thousand asteroids hollowed out

and squatted. Imagine a queer commune orbiting Uranus. Imagine a million bickering communes on Mars. Seed bombing the home planet with endangered species. An endless opportunity for failure and the occasional success. Imagine being able to talk without worrying who's listening. Imagine free housing, free food, and chickens learning to fly in zero gravity. Imagine the sky is a great big blue window and it's breaking. Newspaper boxes are falling from the sky and smashing to pieces in the street. We can make it happen. (A space program is an excuse to do anything!)

3. A Tight Rope Over the Void

(Science— Figure it out your damn self.)

I love my mama. However, I live with my friends. If there are future generations of humans, they will probably have drifted even farther from the old tribalism, and less-old atomized family of our time. To them, we will be dumb artifacts of history, like all the black-and-white people in Charlie Chaplin movies. What do we owe to the future, if anything? What a stupid question! The future will take everything we have, and everything we have ever cared about will become nostalgia, then shit, then dust. You've no more choice in this than anybody else, so there's no excuse to go grieving about your loss. You didn't earn any of it in the first place. All we can do is avoid blowing up the spot for the little ones who come later on. Imagine

their chubby little cheeks, crying out, “Oh, papa! Oh, mama! Why are you such fucking breeders? Why must I eke by on this paved rock? Why must I sell myself, my labor and my blood, to gain my daily bread?” For crying out loud, can we get out of here now? This whole place is a sleazy theater, and the show is over, and it’s time to go.

Let’s gather our things and leave, we’ve got better things to do than watch an empty stage. Anything would be better than this. (A space program is an excuse to do anything!)

Coming Soon: A Thorough Analysis Of Materials and Technologies Involved in The Production of HSOF (High Standard of Living) Extraterrestrial Habitats, Utilizing Current ISRU (In Situ Resource Utilization) Technologies and Disregard For International Copyright and Patent Laws

Mars First!

*The tighter that our humanity closes ranks to
conquer nature on Mars, the tighter the elements
close theirs to avenge the victory.*

Aleksandr Malinovskii Bogdanov
Red Star (1908)

It's easy to laugh off the Bush-Cheney regime's plans for "establishing an extended human presence" on the Moon and Mars. "We will build new ships to carry man forward into the universe, to gain a new foothold on the Moon," said Bush, a man who constantly fails to correctly pronounce the word "nuclear" and whose own scientific wisdom has had him publicly defending creationist fairytales over Darwinian evolutionary theory. "We choose to explore space because doing so improves our lives and lifts our national spirit." Coming out of the mouth of such a cowardly, belligerent, and proudly ignorant obscurantist like Bush, talk of interplanetary missions sounds as unbelievably silly as the music on a Christian rock CD.

But the issue of Bush Administration's tendency towards faith-based foreign policy decisions and other deeply creepy manifestations of conservative Judeo-Christian supernaturalism is

reason enough to take this ninnyhammer's threat to the lunar and Martian wilderness very seriously. Take note, for instance, of how Bush concluded his NASA talk: "Let us continue the journey. May God bless." Compare this to Bush's remarks at the memorial for the space shuttle crew killed when the Columbia blew up while coming in for a landing in February 2003 — Bush quoted from the ranting, spittle-flecked Old Testament prophet Isaiah, adding "The same Creator who names the stars also knows the names of the seven souls we mourn today. The crew of the shuttle Columbia did not return safely to Earth; yet we can pray that all are safely home." Ah yes, once again the fetid illusion of Divine Providence has been conjured up; like the fifteenth-century Portuguese Catholic explorers who built a huge crucifix on an estuary of the Congo River before inaugurating the slave trade, and the crazed, paranoid Puritans who murderously came to North America on the Mayflower, the miserabilist God and His pox-ridden blessings which have consistently ruined environments and ecologies in every corner of the world will be expected on board Bush's armada to Mars.

Christianity, of course, is at least as befouling to wild regions as soiled, disposable diapers in a landfill that was once a forest glade, choking clouds of carbon monoxide smog in the summer wind, and wretched, stagnant pools of Superfund-ready water. The religious pollution of outer space

by the US military and defense industry has been going on for decades, beginning on December 24, 1968 when the astronauts aboard Apollo 8 took turns reading from the Bible in worldwide broadcasts as their capsule entered lunar orbit. Even more horrifying, Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin self-administered Holy Communion before making his “one small step” into the Sea of Tranquility in late July 1969. Astronaut-turned-evangelical minister James Irwin described his 1971 moonwalk as a revelation of “the power of God”; astronaut Charles Duke returned from the Moon to become a Christian missionary, and frequently sermonized about “walking on the Moon and walking with the Son.”

The regularly-scheduled space shuttle missions over the last decade seemed to have led to a renaissance of monotheistic mumbo-jumbo. Astronaut Tammy Jernigan talked about her blind Christian faith during a live broadcast from aboard the shuttle in 1995; likewise, Shannon Lucid, the daughter of missionaries, took sermons with her on the shuttle to the Russian space station Mir and reportedly held daily Bible studies with the cosmonauts. Senator and Presbyterian Church elder John Glenn, who went back into space on the shuttle in 1998 at age 77, said during an in-orbit space capsule news conference that he prays every day and warned that “everybody should.”

The space shuttle missions have also inspired some especially grotesque outbursts of military-industrial theology. USAF Colonel Jeffrey Williams had a six-hour space walk while flying with the Atlantis shuttle in May 2000, and he has since repeatedly explained that deploying top secret military spy satellites while being suspended four hundred miles above the Earth's surface helped him to see how "we are all an infinitesimal speck in light of the Creator Himself." This realization "amplified my belief in the Creator," he crowed, and it led him to conclude that "apart from Christ, we are insignificant." As for the search for extraterrestrial life-forms, Williams says that his "gut feeling based on studying the Scripture is to doubt the existence of life elsewhere, as Earth and mankind are described in God's revelation."

Columbia's God Squad

Most recently and most egregiously, God was the copilot for the crew aboard the doomed space shuttle *Columbia*. After the spectacular *Columbia* explosion spewed debris over a wide swath of Texas and the southeastern US, one major mass-media conglomerate put a remarkably bizarre story out over its newswire about how the dead crew members could be linked to "an extraordinary variety of faith traditions" ("extraordinary" in this case meaning five different flavors of

Christianity, one Jew, and a conservative Hindu Sikh). Shuttle commander Rick Husband was a fanatical Charismatic evangelical Protestant who had been active in a small church in Texas. In a video that Husband recorded for the congregation before the fatal flight, he had declared that his achievements in space were possible “only in America” and “only by the grace of God.” Husband had failed the NASA physical exam four times before he was accepted into the shuttle program; during that time, he said, he dedicated himself to “learning what it’s like to live life as a Christian, the way God would want us to live.” When he signed autographs for space shuttle groupies, he would also add quotes from his favorite Biblical verses. Husband had left a note with his church’s reverend to be opened in the event of his death aboard the shuttle that instructed the minister to “Tell them about Jesus. He means everything to me.” He was remembered as “a model church member” who sang in the choir and who even went as far as to offer to donate his vintage Camaro to the church building fund.

Also among the dead was a Roman Catholic, an Episcopalian, and a relatively godless Unitarian Universalist *Columbia*’s science officer, as it turns out, was a Baptist; after the explosion, his father was certain that his vaporized son was “in a better place than where he would be on Earth.” And then there was Israeli Defense Force Colonel

Ilan Ramon, another godly celebrity killed aboard the *Columbia*. Ramon was the State of Israel's first astronaut who kept kosher while in orbit and brought Holocaust relics with him into space, including a Torah that had been used at a concentration camp Bar Mitzvah and children's art from Auschwitz. He prayed aloud when the shuttle's orbit took him over Jerusalem.

But Islam was involved, too. The fact that one of the towns below the Columbia explosion was Palestine, TX was not lost on one of London's most notorious extremist Muslim clerics, Abu Hamza. "It is a punishment from God," Hamza railed, since Hinduism, Christianity, and Judaism are

a trinity of evil against Islam. It is a strong message for the Israeli. He spoke about the Holocaust and tried to make some religious advancement from outer space and gain some moral high ground, hence you have seen this message over Palestine.

Such revolting and empty-headed remarks should serve as a warning of things to come if we do not take steps to stop plans for the US's renewed extraterrestrial imperialist adventurism. Are we going to stand by passively as the madness of monotheistic religious wars, witch hunts, fundamentalist terrorism, genocide and concentration camps are imported onto Luna, Mars, and beyond? Isn't it enough that these military-indus-

trial-statist gangsters have already played golf and erected a US flag on the Moon's surface? Isn't that enough interplanetary poisoning and humiliation for one civilization?

Mars and the star-fields of our galaxy are a wilderness that must always remain uncivilized, free territory. We should begin to adamantly resist any and all attempts by corporate capitalists, technocratic militarists, and dangerously narcissistic statist to further their monstrous plans to despoil and colonize celestial bodies.

Praise the Lord & Pass the Ammo

There can be no mistaking the putrefied stink of US Christian triumphalism wafting from the alarmingly pernicious project to militarize and colonize outer space. The matrix of the overlapping motivations of God, capital, and bombing superiority are what frames the future objectives of the US space program, and to not take seriously consider the ramifications of such a pathological perspective is a grave error. Most international commentators simply giggled and dismissed Bush's January 14th speech at NASA as an election-year distraction designed to divert attention away from the latest spastic convulsions of the terminally-ill capitalist market's downward spiral. (Bush actually hailed US astronauts as "spacial entrepreneurs" and openly indulged in lusty flights of fancy about the Moon's

“abundant resources” of “raw materials” that will one day “be harvested and processed”). Other critics suggested that vainglorious visions of a massive military-industrial operation to some faraway place without a heavily-armed indigenous resistance movement might help Americans to forget the daily follies and atrocities of the Afghanistan and Iraq quagmires. But a few sharp-eyed antimilitarists were quick to contextualize the proposed Mars mission as a new, interplanetary Manifest Destiny that would include weaponizing outer space with a multi-layered “shield” of Star Wars humbuggery and dangerously poisonous nuclear-powered rocket engines.

Secretary of Defense Donald “Strangelove” Rumsfeld and his Pentagon bully-boys have been nursing on the undead fantasy of Reagan’s rayguns (and the flimsy pyramid schemes needed to pay Big Business aerospace death merchants for building them) for more than twenty years, and a manned mission to Mars by the year 2020 coincides nicely with their own pet project, the USAF Space Command’s “Vision 2020” agenda. As antimilitarist critics have pointed out, the Space Command’s ambitious, self-proclaimed aims of “global vigilance, reach, and power,” of dominating “the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investments” and of integrating “Space Forces into warfighting capabilities across a full spectrum of conflict” are

congruent with the recent bureaucratic regime change at NASA executed by a presidential advisory “refocusing team” that recommended that the agency be re-organized away from a State-sponsored scientific-experimental orientation towards privatized and even more explicitly military-commercial ends.

In so many respects, the knotting together of God, capital, and weaponry calls to mind countless other examples in human history when, armed with missionaries and artillery cannons, European and US military-commercial expeditions “explored” and ruthlessly colonized other lands. Bush’s diktat for a US invasion and occupation of Mars is not some visionary notion or a freak aberration, but rather one more point on a continuum that began when Columbus and his crewmen pillaged, enslaved, Christianized, and infected the Tainos in 1492. Knowing what we know now, what would have green anarchists done when they learned the news of Francisco Pizarro’s military mission for gold, God and glory in the Andes? What would have been the anti-civilization anarcho-primitivist solution in 1805 to the problem of the Lewis and Clark expedition? How would have radical, deep environmentalists reacted to what was going on in the Wright brothers’ crude aviation workshop? These questions about the abominations of long-lost yesterdays may seem foolish to ponder in the midst of

what we are all fighting against today, but we cannot lose sight of what our struggles might very well be tomorrow, regardless of whether or not such schemes seem feasible from a technological, scientific, or budgetary standpoint. Rather than shrugging off the Bush-Cheney regime's audacious plots to militarize, annex, strip mine and contaminate the lunar and Martian wilderness, we should begin considering it to be a sick outrage no less loathsome as their wet dreams for a metropolis of police barracks, oil rigs, banks and churches built in the heart of the 19 million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

No Compromise in Defense of Sister Mars

In the name of wilderness, wildness, and possibly wildlife, we must work together to put a stop to the US occupation of the Moon and Mars. We need to prevent any further capitalist-productivist, imperialist, and Judeo-Christian contamination of the solar system's open, untamed spaces. For decades, there have been climate orbiters, polar landers, and Mariner, Viking, and Pathfinder spacecraft sent to Mars. In the last year alone, Martian missions have included Nozomi, the Japanese-built Martian orbiter, the European Space Agency's Mars Express (which carried the ill-fated British explorer called *Beagle 2*), and two NASA current explorers Spirit and Opportunity. As you read this, plans are well under way for

launching an even more advanced expeditionary flotilla of NASA Mars craft, such as a reconnaissance orbiter for 2005, the Phoenix lander in 2007, and a science laboratory rover for 2009. The moons of Jupiter—Ganymede, Callisto, Io, and Europa—are under attack by the US as well, as was illustrated by the eight-year Galileo mission that ended last September. Laden with fifty pounds of plutonium 238 (an isotope 300 times more radioactive than plutonium 239, the four-and-a-half pounds of fissionable material used by the US government against civilian targets in Nagasaki), the still-functioning Galileo space probe orbited Jupiter's moons before it was deliberately plunged by NASA into the dense Jovian atmosphere where it exploded as spectacularly as a hydrogen bomb detonation on a South Pacific atoll.

It is not too early to develop autonomous, non-hierarchical, anonymous cells of anti-authoritarian individuals willing to take responsibility for stopping the exploitation of off-world natural worlds. We cannot afford to wait to help educate the public about the vile crimes being committed against the wild spaces of outer space. Nor can we expect others to halt those who will profit greatly from ravaging and destroying outer space.

The rape of the Red Planet by the US armed forces, industry, and the apparatuses of the State is the worse kind of ecological corruption and

greedy capitalist speculation. But it is not inevitable or unpreventable. The use and abuse of the Martian wilderness by the US is not a natural outcome — it is not like the rise of the Sun or the fall of rain, or the inescapable effects of those things falling under the jurisdiction of the laws of gravity. For those of us stubbornly opposed to imperialism, militarism, and ecocide, we must take our fight against these colonialist butchers to yet another distant land. The further invasions of Mars can be stopped.

Dan LaCoss

Connecting to Place In the Land of the Lost: Questions for the Nomadic Wanderers in All of Us

*Livin' on the road my friend, was gonna
keep you free and clean. Now you wear
your skin like iron and your breath's as
hard as kerosene.*

Townes Van Zandt, Poncho and Lefty

*I've been traveling so long...How'm I ever
going to know my home... when I see it
again.*

Joni Mitchell, Black Crow

*Ah, my friends from the prison they ask
unto me, 'How good, how good does it feel
to be free?'*

*And I answer them, most mysteriously, 'Are
birds free from the chains of the skyway?'*

Bob Dylan, Ballad in Plain D

*As I gather up my rambling scribbles, wandering
emphasis, and drifting thoughts into a (hopefully)
more coherent and communicative form, I reflect
upon the place I am becoming a part of.. I have*

just returned from a hike up the mountain with some of my neighbors to a spectacular waterfall high atop our watershed. It triggered in me a re-invigorated contemplation of the concept of connecting to place and motivated me to finally wrap up this piece (for now). You see, this aqua-delight is only revealed to us in the middle of winter, a time when many abandon the dank and saturated northwestern lands for sunnier and drier ground. To me, the beauty of this cascading water is a celebration of the essence of this place, of the seasonal shifts and the cyclical nature of its patterns. It reminds me of the vital and tangible substances which we are all comprised of (quite literally, as this is part of my water source). For me, it is only after weeks of pounding rain that this place comes alive again in a certain sense. It is rejuvenated and revitalized for another year of birth, growth, and death (and all the life in between). And it is only through sweat and time, joy and sorrow, warmth and frigidness, that I will grow to be a part of it and understand it and add my influence in a balanced, yet distinct way. It is from this learning and unlearning, disconnecting and reconnecting, that I grow and explore. With my roots planted firmly in the ground, dreams flowing from there, and passions freely explored...

** * * **

We've all seen the bumpersticker: *All Who Wander Are Not Lost*. True enough, but does this in-

herently imply one knows where they are, have been, or are going? Sure, there is an intriguing element of romanticism to it (something I'm not sure I want leading me around). Some of my favorite songs, images, and stories are about the spontaneous and freewheelin' traveler serendipitously flowing and colliding with unexpected situations, characters, and experiences. The allure of this archetype suggests something profound, perhaps the longing to connect to some missing or repressed sense, or possibly a distinct yearning for something intensely deviant from the crap put before us, possibly it's never fitting into a grossly disjointed world, or maybe simply a response to boredom. It does seem necessary to be physically in motion to chase our dreams (if chasing them is how we wish to live them), and conceivably, for some, this also applies to location(s) of habitation. There are many lessons to be learned and inspiration to be gained from the drifter's and mobile adventurer's narratives for sure, but there also seem to be many limitations, trappings, and delusions, often poetically realized in the terminal chapters of their journeys. But I don't necessarily have the desire to be a ragged road-worn wandering sage-like phenomenon, I just wanna live, here and now. But hey, the travelin' is the moment, so why worry about any presumably more fixed context or situation?

Well, here's the dilemma as I see it, in this

post-modern reality where most of us are all so dislocated and separated from our world (to more or lesser extents, without a doubt, but those who claim they are not are rarely honest with themselves), many of the more radical and inspiring respond to this condition by surfing the waves of displacement, and perhaps at the expense of *deeply* connecting to a place and bioregion. To be clear, for me, place is not merely a physical locality or abstract spot on a map, but a context or situation which includes plants, animals, land formations, climate, patterns, narratives, people, etc (and, unfortunately in most places, culture, politics, and other hyper-socialized phenomenon). And, by *deeply* connecting, I don't presume to know for others what that specifically means, nor do I limit this to a mere "biological" understanding. There is much to be explored on this topic, and this initial exercise is not meant as an explicit call for people to run to the forest or create a community of any particular type, nor am I suggesting any specific bioregion as ideal, as connection to place is possible almost anywhere, provided we are open and enthusiastic. I am certainly no proponent of unnecessarily fortifying positions, in ideas, methods, or physical locales, but for me, so-called-temporary autonomous zones or touring around between the margins is unsatisfactory and incomplete compared with a life of ongoing and deepening connection to a

place. I hope to begin a larger discussion that can ask some questions and attempt to distill from them some strategic momentum for myself and for those whose visions may generally overlap in places. This feels essential to me for deep reconnection and healing from an ongoing domestication process that subtly disconnects and brutally tears us from belonging anywhere.

Now we all have abundant reasons for what we do, hopefully derived from a symbiotic combination of critical thought, practical considerations, and unobstructed desires. So, I am not judging those who choose more nomadic ways, I am just hoping to examine the strategic motivations and consider the ramifications of the patterns of our lives as we attempt to move towards a wilder existence as we each may see it. Born into the armpit of industrial and social hell (New Jersey), I have spent what would statistically be half my life, wandering and searching for a place to call home, where my roots can take hold, where I can actively be present without overwhelming thoughts of unsettledness and dissatisfaction moving my mind and body elsewhere. I feel I have found that place for myself. No, I have not discovered a mythical paradise or “perfect place”, just one that I feel I can grow in, in a somewhat healthy way despite any inevitable drawbacks. I have found a place to explore, understand, and become part of. But mostly, I have

found this place within myself. It is possible that I may be subconsciously idealizing this (at least enough to allow myself to propagate some roots), and I understand well that people travel to live temporarily or seasonally in various regions for many reasons: financial, family, opportunities, novelty, change, and comfort, to name a few, and there are obviously benefits for some to live in this manner. But what is traded for these benefits? How does one connect beyond a superficial appreciation or tourist-like perception if their roots never intensely penetrate? How do we develop communities based on deep affinity, trust, and understanding of one another if we are always transient in nature? Without some level of long-term engagement with each other, without a place, how do we maintain combined mutual projects and ongoing explorations that help us to achieve greater autonomy and self-sufficiency as communities with less and less dependence on the system? How might we explore the balance between change and constancy, between motion and stillness? These are just some questions which initially come to mind when examining the differences between a more nomadic and a more fixed reality within the context we currently inhabit and possible future situations. **Questions for the nomadic wanderer in all of us...**

Often, the contemporary nomadic wanderer claims to have a freer life by not being bogged

down by the baggage of a more sedentary existence (commitments, accumulation of things, perceived limits of the area), that they can spontaneously decide to go anywhere and do anything at anytime based solely on their desires. This, beyond being a generally rhetorical position, does not acknowledge the baggage of the wanderer and sets up absolutist straw arguments and false dichotomies. It does seem that the more sedentary a life becomes, the more potential there is for certain dynamics that one might view as problematic, but this is certainly no given, and perhaps a partial trade-off for other dynamics that might be seen as more desirable. Personally, I aspire to a bioregional-centered existence, one which might include shorter seasonal travels between more permanent nodes, areas, or encampments, rather than a sedentary one, which implies a passive, inert, and inanimate existence too rigid for integration into organic ebbs and flows, not to mention personal desires. But to be placeless surely has its drawbacks. Regardless of the level of independence, the wanderer typically needs to rely on those with a more permanent situation for many basic needs, ones that often require a more fixed situation like shelter, grown food, storage, stability, and the intimate knowledge of local resources, to name a few. Also, the continuity of a localized social dynamic is often supported by those who remain, offering the wanderer situa-

tions to enter into with little responsibility for making them happen. They become consumers and spectators of a living community. Often, they become the biggest critics of these situations, while risking very little to change them since there is little ongoing connection. These critiques can be a useful detached perspective, but they often lack a deeper understanding of ongoing dynamics. For many who wander, there seems to be a perpetual dissatisfaction with wherever they are and what they are doing, stemming partly from their context, and perhaps, a lapse of creativity, confidence, or motivation. Others desperately fear being “out of the loop” or “missing out” on what is occurring everywhere else, creating an inability to focus attention on where they currently are. This, perhaps, somewhat explains “scene-hopping”, and the massive influx of “lost souls” and people who wanted to be where the action was when Eugene was a hotspot in the late ‘90s and early ‘00s, and similar spots since then, rather than creating something unique where they were. Then there is, of course, always the overly-generous suggestion that the traveler brings a unique perspective and the stories and songs of other places. This can surely be a positive thing, but it also tends to become a specialized role for those either unwilling or unable to take responsibility for their own nourishment and needs and to deal with the perceived ups and downs of being

part of a living community and a place.

Some present the life of the traveler or seasonal dweller as closer to how many gatherer-hunters live(d) outside (or before) civilization, but beyond mostly superficial aspects there really is no comparison. The resemblance is poetic if nothing else. Not to idealize any life-way or flatten those with very unique characteristics, nomadic gatherer-hunters do not typically travel outside of a larger bioregion — moving up and down valleys and rivers, from coast to mountains, wetter weather to drier, etc — but rarely to another side of a continent, across vast spaces, or to dramatically divergent terrains, climates, and cultures. This is most likely for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the lack of modern technological transportation systems, as the perimeters of their world is determined by their own feet, something any post-civilized (non-massified) existence would also entail. It makes sense to me that long-term strategies might want to take this into account. Terrain, plant species, animals, climate, and other localized patterns surely have variety in pedal route, but more along a gradual shift or gradation, in which much of the make-up and life of an area remains relatively congruous, or at least fairly predictable as one understands and moves within it. Gatherer-hunters don't seem to just wander around and stumble upon nourishment for sustaining their life, but instead, they

appear to mostly follow ancestral routes and techniques passed on through annual journeys and procedures (not that dissimilar from other migratory animals) and through an instinctual understanding of place. Specific treks might be varied, but they are usually modified more by things like the foods available based on that year's weather than any particular whim (not that this might not be a factor as well), but still along the same general recognized route. Their journeys seem to be about their survival and understanding of the patterns around them, not merely thrill-seeking. They know the foods, medicines, dangers, and crucial places along the way. There is a perpetual nature and connectedness to their travels, not haphazard drifting or scene hopping. This may not jive with some purists of anarchist dogma who wish to do anything at anytime, regardless of petty physical limitations like eating, but it does have very important relevance pertaining to taking responsibility for our own survival and living with other patterns of life, from which our unique beings may thrive in connection to others in a shared home.

But enough about gatherer-hunters, as we are not them (at least not in practice or in socialized mindset). While I do believe gatherer-hunters are humans in their most animalistic form (that I have yet to see or understand, but certainly not limited to), and thus how we evolved as part of the natural

world in a connected and sustainable way, their situation is not exclusively relevant to us right now. Unfortunately civilized humans have significantly altered the planet and our current footprint (carbon and otherwise) does not match that of a gatherer-hunter. Although I may slowly move more in that general direction, this mode of living offers only a nugget of inspiration and wisdom, within a larger context, to the ways we might live healthier, less oppressive to other beings, and free, both now and in the near future. Considering the immense destruction that civilization has unfurled on the planet, with forests turned into deserts, oceans serving as toxic dumps, rivers fashioned into dammed irrigation ditches and power plants, thousands upon thousands of species relegated to the domains of tales and history, and humans converted into production equipment and consuming implements, it is hard to imagine a foraging lifestyle for many, at least not until a prolonged period of recovery has ensued and a dramatic reduction in human population occurs. The agrarian lifestyle, however, offers too many of the traps that we are currently entangled in, with considerable manipulation and control of almost all environmental factors, tremendous resource extraction and displacement, not to mention surplus and the social institutions which seem to inevitably come along with it. The turn to an agrarian based lifestyle seems to be at the elemental stages of civili-

zation, which may have introduced the development of social stratification, taboos, subjugation, religion, cities, and government. Also, as a step away from living within a symbiotic relationship with the rest of one's environment, it may have led to a disconnect and psychological shift, not to mention a dramatic increase in population and resource depletion.

To me, one of the more interesting and realistic possibilities for humans wanting to reintegrate into the patterns of life in a more sustainable and less manipulative way is a life as foraging-horticulturists, combining the most useful and least controlling methods of both. Obviously, its parameters are extremely site specific, dependant on plant and animal species still remaining and the climate and terrain of an area, and has a limiting factor as far as scale, thus prioritizing small-scaled environmentally connected communities. It is also a very practical entry into a more connected reality, one that could transition from a more garden-dependant practice to a more wild one, but existing somewhere on that continuum or consisting of a thoughtful blending of strategies for sustenance and self-organization. Permaculture is but one concept that offers some interesting ideas on a transitional space between these methods of food procurement and interaction with the world. This approach is not too dissimilar from certain native peoples who minimally

planted or seasonally altered their landscape as compensation for temporary or long-term deficiencies in wild foods, and as populations began to increase, or as a method of dealing with the beginning stages of or recovery from colonization. To me, this exploration makes more sense for our situation than any ideologically driven absolutist purity about returning to our “true nature”. Approaching this delicate balance with critical thought of our impacts, tendencies, methods, and mindsets, and with abundant creativity, we could begin to live as autonomous communities that value individual freedom, collective vision, and ecological balance. Rather than endlessly and exclusively study gatherer-hunters, who admittedly offer extremely vital examples of humans thriving within the balance of wild areas, it might be more advantageous to put some emphasis on understanding and learning from those who live(d) healthily on more marginal lands and situations (those who are active participants in their world, in a balanced way, without developing unhealthy social dynamics often attributed to others who plant food.) and utilizing the applicable lessons, combined with our own particular desires, to a specific place.

But this is beginning to turn into a different essay. So, briefly contemplating the concept of the foraging-horticulturists, or really any small-scale earth-based community, how do nomadism

and sedentism relate, and how might we explore the balance between change and constancy? There are so many levels to these questions, compounded with individual and collective perspectives and priorities, but it seems to me that the more time spent in a relationship (if that time is spent in open, active, honest, and inquisitive intimacy), the deeper it may become, the more intertwined and supportive it can be. Where nomadism (in its most positive sense) can accumulate a wide variety of experiences, lessons, and substance for living, it tends to be restricted in other ways. What do the nomadic wanderers, perpetual travelers, and the generally unsettled trade for the benefits of a less attached and consistent existence? There is an intimacy with place (or at least there can be, and seems to be with uncivilized peoples, and less civilized earth-based cultures) that feels too deep to grasp without not only weeks, or seasons, or even years in a place, but with generations upon generations of people who share their stories, techniques, and perceptions. There is not only the dynamic experience of living with a place that could contain in it all aspects of sustenance (on many levels), but also the collective experience of living with others in connection. These relationships connect us to life. These seem to be what have been most severed, isolated, distorted, and alienated in the modern human experience.

Our relationship with climate, seasons, local foods and medicines are important factors in connecting us to place. Again, relationships connect us, and the more we have with a place, the more connected we may become. Living through season upon season with a place offers us a wide variety, and yet similar experiences, to create connection. Our interaction may become more fluid, interactive, and organic as we transition into a place. Whereas, the transient perspective on “ideal climate” is odd to me, one I believe has much to do with our socialized needs to be “conventionally comfortable” with as little effort as possible. Rather than allowing our bodies to adjust to changes around us and challenging our mind’s trained expectations, we tend to drastically alter our surroundings or relocate to an entirely different place to keep the dry and 72 degree supposed “ideal” condition for human comfort. While some wish to go where the sun is always shining, this seems to be a somewhat cursory and one dimensional aspect of place and reminds me of the fictional safety of New Agers who only want to think “positive thoughts” or a Beach Boys record, two things I just can’t seem to develop a taste for. This endless summer mentality is, in my opinion, a disconnected perspective. The cycles of a season inform much of what a place is. For instance, where I live, the green summers are directly related to the wet winters.

Specific life has developed here because of the particulars of the place. This is the case everywhere. There are essential factors of a place which make it what it is, and understanding them and moving within (rather than against them or placing value on them) connect us. When we continually rip ourselves from it, recontextualize ourselves, we become dislocated, and possibly, neurotic, obtaining a virtual “high” from this dislocation, and philosophically rationalizing it as a “more free” existence. We may even develop an addiction or perceived need for this perpetual relocation. But, except for migratory birds that naturally have the ability to fly and have evolved over time in this unique way to travel great distances seasonally, civilized humans are the only terrestrial creatures that move such great distances and complete transformation of setting with the seasons. This has only been an option, to the scale, amount, and frequency that currently transpires, with mass society and technology.

I think most anarchists, including myself, tend to prioritize the “breaking away from” tendency. A necessary and understandable response to our condition as civilized humans. But, I think we are often intimidated and lost when we attempt to advocate for, and even more so, connect to, anything. We become hyper-critical of everything. While it is essential to move with constant critique, if it is at the level of paralysis and abso-

lute pessimism, it is ultimately useless. Hyper-anything is typically a sign of overcompensation concealing an emptiness, rather than an open-ended, yet clear and precise understanding and actualization. The concept of “rewilding” can bridge this gap in theory and practice. I tend to think that “rewilding” has much to do with decivilizing our minds. Allowing ourselves to open up to situations and experiences without the ceaseless baggage of civilization (or at least consciously minimizing the unhealthy appendages) is essential in initiating the experience of going feral. For many, however, it remains solely an intellectual and rhetorical procedure, with most practice avoided because of its impurity, or effort required. If it does get physical, it typically repeats certain survival skills over and over. Practical skills like starting fires, building shelters, skinning roadkill, etc, are significant, but more involved explorations and connecting to the world we inhabit seem to require a long-term immersion into living in a place and with people. Beginning to know our world is a slow process, one we are coming into damaged. Those who are born into connected relationships do not learn through scar tissue, but through eyes which have never starred blankly upon a computer screen, or maybe even a printed word. They develop relationships with their world with ears that have never heard a jackhammer or the beep of an alarm clock, but

instead, the sound of wind approaching, a critter chewing, or a fire crackling. They explore their world on feet that have never walked on the unforgivingness of concrete, with hands that have not been trained to push buttons and type on keyboards. They kiss with mouths that have never uttered useless rhetoric and digest foods in stomachs which do not know processed sugars or mass produced starches. They come into the world whole and, hopefully, remain there. Despite our impediment, we too can connect. But we need to start somewhere, some place.

New questions arise, only to suggest even more, and none of them are easy or cut-and-dried. How do we assess our negative impact on a place? Can we be a part of healing wounds humans created and be a part of restoration? How do we begin to heal and reintegrate? Where do transitional concepts fit into an anti-civilization practice? How do we balance a perceived deep understanding with the dangers of thinking we know what is best?

We are living in the land of the lost, where we are shattered and disconnected from the perpetuity and endless cycles of our existence, immensely constant, dynamically in the midst of radical change, and subtly growing and dying; one of being. We can be lost anywhere; far away, down the road, where we reside, or in our heads. It might be enjoyable if anywhere we hung our

hat was home, and maybe some can live that, but to me, it seems, that a deep connection to place brings a wholeness with it, one of being at home. One of belonging, or at least trying to belong, to something different, something alive, rather than one of perpetual collisions and temporarily coinciding with things springing from the motivations of civilization. Maybe for some this is holding up in a forest canyon with some folks figuring out how to live with the place, for others it may be forming relationships with a few places, and for some, never embracing any place. But the road has its own chains, because chasing freedom, seems to me, leaves you running on the chase rather than the stuff of life. The grass is not usually any greener despite our continuing fickleness. I don't want to be a transplant forever. I may never be indigenous to a place, but I can be part of it. I'd rather be fully present, plant roots, and live and create where I'm at, than always hoping its just a little better down the road...

Sal Insieme

Our Generation Ships Will Sink

*The Earth is the cradle of humanity,
but one cannot live in a cradle forever.*

Konstantin Tsiolkovsky

Humanity traveling to the stars is an ancient dream, and a late 19th and early 20th century project, proposed quickly after the first developments in rocketry. The idea spread through world culture, mainly by way of science fiction. Countless stories described people visiting planets orbiting other stars, and by a process of cultural diffusion, space travel became one part of a plausible and widely-held consensus future for humanity, a future we seemed to be moving into with accelerating speed as the 20th century progressed.

With the enormous successes of Star Trek and Star Wars, the idea was firmly planted in the popular imagination: if we survived as a species, we would be moving out into the galaxy. This awesome diaspora would mark our maturity or success as a species, and would enable us to outlive the Earth itself, should it suffer a natural disaster or be destroyed by some human folly. The thought of long-term galactic survival for humanity was comforting to some, and in any case it seemed inevitable, humanity's fate or destiny.

When we landed people on the moon in 1969, and robots on Mars in 1976, it seemed we were already on the way.

But in the same century the idea spread, we were also learning things that made it seem less and less likely that we could do it. When the notion was first broached, we didn't even know how big the universe was; now we do, and it's bigger than we thought. Meanwhile, the tremendous increase in our knowledge of biology has taught us that human beings are much more complicated than we thought, being in effect complex assemblages interpenetrated with larger ecologies.

These and other findings make a contemporary evaluation of the starfaring plan rather startling: one begins to see it can't be done.

Oh no! For some people this is a disturbing and deeply pessimistic conclusion to come to. Then when you combine that new judgment with the recently discovered problems concerning the plan to terraform and inhabit Mars (presence of perchlorates and absence of nitrogen), and we come to an entirely new realization about our species: there is no Planet B.

Earth is our only home.

Oh no again!

This conclusion, startling to some, obvious to others, has ramifications that are worth pondering. If it comes to be a generally agreed on view, it might change how we act as individuals

and a civilization. These changes in behavior might turn out to be crucial for our descendants. So although this entire discussion consists of speculations about hypothetical futures, which is to say, science fictions, still they are worth thinking about, as useful orientations in our sense of our own history as a species.

* * * *

The problems that will keep us from going to the stars can be loosely grouped into categories: physical, biological, ecological, sociological, and psychological. One could add economical, but economic problems are trivial compared to the rest, as economics is amenable to adjustment on demand. Reality is not so tractable.

* * * *

Physically, the main issue is that the stars are too far away.

This problem has been finessed in many science fiction stories by the introduction of some kind of faster-than-light travel, but really this is not going to happen. It's a convenience employed to get us out into a great story space, a magic carpet that gives us the galaxy. I like that story space very much, but any realistic plan for getting to the stars will require slower-than-light travel, probably quite a bit slower. The usual speed mentioned in these discussions, as keeping a balance be-

tween the fastest one can imagine accelerating a spaceship while still being able to decelerate it later, is one tenth of light-speed.

The closest stars are four light years away, although now we know that this Centauri group has no planets we can terraform. Among other nearby stars, Tau Ceti, twelve light-years away, is now known to have planets in its habitable zone; they are too massive for human inhabitation (five or six g), but they might be orbited by habitable moons. Traveling at one-tenth light-speed, a voyage there would take 120 years plus the time needed for acceleration and deceleration, so that people speak of approximately two hundred years transit time.

Thus a crossing to even the closest stars will require a multiple generation effort, and the spaceship will need to be a kind of ark, carrying all the other animals and plants the humans will carry with them to their new world. This suggests a very large and complicated machine, which would have to function in the interstellar medium for two centuries or more, with no possibility of resupply, and limited possibilities for repair. The spaceship would also have to contain within it a closed biological life support system, in which all the flows of energy and matter would have to recycle as close to perfectly as possible, minimizing catches or clogs of any kind.

Here is where the biological and ecological

problems come to the fore, but sticking for now to purely physical problems, the starship would be exposed to far more radiation than we are on Earth, where the atmosphere and magnetosphere protect us to an extent. Effects of that extra radiation are not fully known, but they won't be good. Cladding would help, but would add to the weight of the ship; the fuel carried for deceleration might serve as cladding en route, but that fuel will get burned as the starship slows down, increasing the starfarers' exposure, already higher than it would have been on Earth.

Lastly, in terms of purely physical problems, if the starship runs into anything substantial (like a couple of kilograms) while moving at a tenth of light speed, the impact could be catastrophic.

These physical problems, especially those concerning propulsion and deceleration, are the ones that have received the most consideration by the starship discussion and advocacy community. As engineering problems they can be given at least hypothetical engineering solutions, using equations from physics that we know to be true. Thus they are, in effect, the easiest problems that starships will face, being relatively straightforward. But they aren't that easy.

* * * *

Biological problems are harder for humans to solve than physical problems, because biology

concerns life, which is extraordinarily complex, and includes emergent properties and other poorly understood behaviors. Ultimately biology is still physics, but it constitutes a more complex set of physical problems, and includes areas we can't explain.

We do know that things go wrong in biological system, because this happens all the time; living things get sick and die. They also very often eat each other, or exist as diseases for each other. These realities mean that biological and ecological problems are much more intractable than physical problems, and are unsolvable in the enclosed context of a multi-generational starship.

It's a matter of size of community, and its isolation from new inputs. A starship would be something like an island, but an island far more isolated than any island on Earth. Processes identified by island biogeography would apply inside a starship, and many of these processes would be accentuated by the radical isolation. As generations of people, plants and animals passed, reproductive and evolutionary success would be harmed by genetic bottlenecks, also disease, limits on resources, and so on. The super-islanding effect might cause more species than usual to become smaller, and to mutate in other ways, as one sees on ordinary islands. And because bacteria tend to evolve at faster rates than mammals, complete isolation may lead to the development of a

suite of bacteria quite different from what the spaceship was sent off with. All mammals include huge numbers of bacteria living inside them, either symbiotically, parasitically, or without significant interaction, so this more rapid genetic shift in the bacterial community could become a big problem to all the larger creatures. On Earth there is a constant infusion of new bacteria into mammals, which sometimes can lead to bad results, as we know; but overall, it's a necessary aspect of healthy existence.

We are always teamed with many other living creatures. Eighty percent of the DNA in our bodies is not human DNA, and this relatively new discovery is startling, because it forces us to realize that we are not discrete individuals, but biomes, like little forests or swamps. Most of the creatures inside us have to be functioning well for the system as a whole to be healthy. This is a difficult balancing act, and does not work perfectly even on Earth; but divorced from Earth's bacterial load, and thus never able to get infusions of new bacteria, the chances of suffering various immune problems similar to those observed in over-sterile Terran environments will rise markedly.

Because we need a broad array of bacterial companions, one would want to bring along as much of Earth as you could fit into a starship. But even the largest starship would be about one-tril-

lionth the size of Earth, and this necessary miniaturization would almost certainly lead to unknown effects in our bodies.

* * * *

This leads us to the ecological problems, or perhaps we were there all along, because biology is always ecological, as every living thing is a miniature ecological system. But focusing on the level of the community brings up the problems created by the metabolic flow of substances in a closed biological life support system. These flows, of both living and non-living substances, would have to stay balanced within fairly tight parameters, and they would have to avoid any major rifts or blockages. Cycles of oxygen and carbon dioxide, nitrogen, phosphorus, and many other chemicals and elements, would have to occur without major fluxes and without catch-points along the way where the element is getting clogged in the system. Earth experiences large ecological fluxes over time, with build-ups of certain elements (oxygen in the atmosphere, carbon in sedimentary rocks) that force evolutionary processes: whatever is alive has to adapt to the new conditions or go extinct. Both often happen.

These fluxes and build-ups would happen inside a starship too, but as the starfarers would be interested in keeping themselves from going extinct, they would have to manage or finesse all

the flows to keep from being harmed by them. This would require supporting almost every other living component of the system, except the diseases they would inevitably carry with them; and if chemicals like phosphorus were bonding to substrates as they cycled in the water cycle, which is something they tend to do, this would be bad for the system as a whole. There would never be a chance for exterior additions to the system, nor any good way to stop the cycles, clean up the substrates and release clogged chemicals. Nor would it be easy to fight or escape diseases that would have piggybacked their way onot the ship; or to deal with any newly evolved aggressive microbial species suddenly feeding on plants, animals, or humans.

In short, a perfectly recycling ecological system is impossible; Earth is not one, and an isolated system a trillion times smaller than Earth would exacerbate the effects of the losses, build-ups, metabolic rifts, balance swings, clogging, and other actions and reactions. All that could be accomplished by starfarers in such an ark would be to deal with these problems as well as possible, minimizing them so that they might hang on long enough for the starship to reach its destination.

But if they do manage that, their problems would have just begun.

* * * *

Before discussing the problems caused by arrival at the destination, we should finishing sketching the problems during the voyage that could be called sociological and psychological. Here things necessarily get more speculative, but for sure it can be said that the people inside the starship will constitute a small and isolated community compared to the population of Earth. And they will be trapped inside their spaceship, and will have to keep the spaceship functioning in order to survive. So whatever their political organization, whether it be military or anarchic, hierarchical or democratic, the situation itself can be called totalitarian.

By this I mean that their situation will demand certain behaviors to ensure their survival. They will have to tightly control their population; both maximum and minimum human numbers will be necessary, and whatever system they devise to achieve this stability, it will not include individual unconstrained choice. Also, there will be quite a few jobs that will simply have to be filled in order for their life support systems to be maintained. Again, however they manage this issue, people will not be free to do what they want, or to do nothing. So in these areas of reproduction and work, generally regarded as basic to human meaning and political freedom, the society in the starship will have to rigidly control themselves. No matter their methods for achieving

this control, they will end up living in some version of a totalitarian state. The spaceship will be their state, and to keep the spaceship functioning, the state will rule.

* * * *

The psychological effects of all these constraints and problems, including the knowledge that Earth exists light years away, with a population millions of times bigger than the ship's, and a land surface a trillion times larger, cannot be known for sure. It might very well feel like exile; it might feel like being born and living one's entire life in prison.

Add to this inescapable isolation and confinement the effects of an entire life spent indoors, and it seems likely there would be some bad psychological effects. Indeed it seems like a recipe for psychological disaster, a veritable witch's brew of alienation and resentment. If anyone were to lose their sanity in this situation and decide to escape from it, it might be possible to sabotage the starship itself, destroying it and thus killing everyone aboard. Guarding against such a violent act would be necessary, thus adding to the totalitarian nature of the state, also to its stress and pressure. There would be not just alienation, isolation, and resentment, but also fear.

Of course people are adaptable, and humans tend to take their surrounding for granted. As starship life would be all they had ever known,

the starfarers might indeed adapt to their situation. But they would know what that situation was, and know the situation on Earth. They would know that their fate was created for them by ancestors who made the choice to enter the starship, a choice they could never unmake. That might be irritating.

* * * *

But say all these problems get solved somehow. Say the starship reaches its target star system, and goes into orbit around the planet the starfarers hope to inhabit. What happens then?

The planet or moon they hope to inhabit will be either alive or dead. It will either harbor indigenous life, or it won't. Both possibilities represent terrible problems for the settlers.

There is a third possibility, of course, which is that they won't be able to tell if the planet or moon is alive or not, just as we can't tell now whether Mars is alive or dead. In that case they would still have a problem, they just wouldn't know what kind of problem they had. Finding out could be hard.

* * * *

If the planet harbors indigenous life, then how that life would interact with Terran life would be impossible to determine without experiment. It might turn out to be no problem, or a small problem, or a fatal problem, but for sure it would have to be investigated before the settlement could

safely proceed. If the indigenous life proved to interact badly with Terran life, this would have to be dealt with, if possible. But dealing with it might not be possible. And at what point would people decide that it was safe to come in contact with an alien life form, much less coexist with it over the long haul? That would be a hard call to make.

* * * *

If the planet turned out to be a dead rock, that would remove the problem of coexisting with an alien, but the planet would then have to be terraformed to make it habitable for Terran life, including humans. This would take many years, possibly centuries, possibly even thousands of years, depending on conditions and resources. Recall that the settlers will only have their single starship to power the effort, and planets or moons with gravity anywhere near Earth's gravity will be large. Terraforming any such body will definitely require a huge application of energy, and thus take a long time. And for most if not all of that time, the settlers will either have to wait in orbit in their starship, where all the starship's problems will still obtain, or they will live in shelters constructed on the surface of the planet, shelters that would be a grounded equivalent of the starship, still harboring most of the problems of a closed biological life support system. Either way, in space or on the new planet, they would

still be experiencing most of the problems that the starship gave them during the voyage. Having survived a couple hundred years, could they continue that success much longer?

Hard to say; but for sure, arrival at the destination does not end their problems.

* * * *

There have been many science fiction stories about starships published, and some have suggested various solutions to the problems outlined above.

One is to send small ships filled with frozen embryos, which would be automatically thawed and birthed on arrival. But this solution ignores the issue of the microbiomes existing inside us; these too would have to be brought along, and even with suites of intestinal bacteria perfectly preserved, calibrated, and introduced into the newborns, there then remains the problem of educating and socializing the new youngsters. Often, if the problem is mentioned at all, the idea seems to be that robots and films and libraries could do the job. Good luck with that!

* * * *

Another suggestion involves what is often called hibernation, or sometimes cold sleep, or cryonic suspension. In this scenario, an adult population is put into some state of suspended animation,

then awakened or reanimated when the ship reaches its destination.

This seems promising at first, and indeed I used the idea myself as an emergency rescue method in my starship novel *Aurora*, so I'm familiar with the suggestion. But if this solution is not to become yet another version of the magic carpet, then it has to be remembered that these suspended passengers would not be completely frozen and inert, for then they would be dead. They are hibernating only; chilled and/or chemically slowed down, but not completely stopped; because we don't know how to restart humans who have completely stopped. The passengers would therefore be living some minimally-active form of life. They would still be alive.

That being the case, they would be aging. Physical problems that they had before being suspended would continue to etoliate; new physical problems might crop up, and proceed slowly along their course. This is what aging means, and slow or fast, it would happen in any living system. It's simply entropy again, rearing its head as it always does.

Because of this unavoidable process, even if we had a very successful method for slowing ourselves down, it would still not stop the passengers from aging and then dying, and that would set a limit on how far they could get. And the distances to the stars are so great that even if the

bubble of the area that we could reach were expanded by a hundred times over what a normally living population might reach, that would still represent a small portion of the galaxy. A thousand light-year trip, taking over ten thousand years, would still only get us out to a bubble representing one percent of the Milky Way. That would include a lot of stars, but how many have just the right planet to fit our needs? And how would we know which ones those might be, in advance of a close examination of them? We would never know where to try to go in the first place, and wouldn't have the luxury of stopping to look around along the way.

* * * *

So it won't work. But people want to believe in it. And it has to be admitted that all the problems combined together, still don't add up to the sheer impossibility of faster-than-light travel. Multi-generational starship travel is simply very, very, very unlikely to succeed. If the odds are something like a million to one, should we try it?

Maybe not.

Should we stop telling the story?

Maybe not. One of the best novels in the history of world literature, Gene Wolfe's *Book of the Long Sun* and *Book of the Short Sun*, a seven-volume saga telling the story of a starship voyage and the inhabitation of a new planetary system,

finesses all these problems in ways that allow huge enjoyment of the story it tells. The novel justifies the entertaining of the idea, no doubt about it.

But when we consider how we should behave now, we should keep in mind that the idea that if we wreck Earth we will have somewhere else to go, is simply false. That needs to be kept in mind, to set a proper value on our one and only planet, so that a moral hazard is not created that allows us to get sloppy with our caretaking of it.

There is no Planet B! Earth is our only possible home!

Oh no!

But wait: why is that so bad?

Here everyone has to answer for themselves. I'm saying it's not bad at all; it just is, and it can be regarded as a good thing. And good or bad, it just is. That's reality. We are not gods, and anyone who thinks of science as a magic wand, or even as a verb, is making a mistake, a category error sometimes called scientism. Drill down a little harder on these issues, look at the evidence; use the scientific method properly. Limits to what we can do will quickly appear around you.

I'm not saying we shouldn't go into space; we should. We should send people to the moon, and Mars, and the asteroids, and every place we can in the solar system, putting up stations and swapping humans in and out of them. This is not

only a beautiful thing to do, but useful in helping us to design a long-term relationship with Earth itself. Space science is an Earth science. The solar system is our neighborhood. But the stars are too far away.

* * * *

After all that's been said above, I see one possible remaining starship story that could be believed:

Hibernating passengers are sent on a small fast starship to a likely-looking nearby planet, with a load of frozen embryos. Most of the hibernating passengers die en route, but some survive, aging and getting weaker, but alive when the destination is reached.

These ancients proceed to thaw, birth, and raise a cohort of embryos, successfully getting them to the stage of babies and toddlers. But now the hibernators, fully awake and alive, and thus aging at the usual rate, begin to die off. It's a race to get the youngsters raised and educated while there are still any elders alive to do the job. Eventually nine decrepit post-hibernation survivors find themselves caring for seventy-six five year-olds. Interesting times! This is the heart of the novel.

The planet they landed on luckily seems dead, and has ice on its surface, and even a breathable atmosphere (not likely but not impossible). The elders spread Terran bacteria on the surface, then release all the plants and animals they

brought with them, hoping to terraform the place as quickly as possible. The planet has nearly one g, which is a good thing for all Terran creatures' health, but means the planet is about as big as Earth. Terraforming will take a while, perhaps a few centuries.

They all move into a habitat on the surface built by their robots, near a frozen sea. After a couple of decades pass, all the hibernators have died, and the youngsters, all twenty-five years old now, have this new world to inhabit.

Good luck to them! Great story! It could join Joanna Russ's *We Who Are About To...* as one of the truly memorable planetary romances in science fiction. Like that great novel, it would be both interesting and believable—indeed not just believable, but the only starfaring scenario one could possibly believe!

If you can.

Kim Stanley Robinson



1 Introduction

5 On Becoming an Autonomous Astronaut

John Eden

10 Interview on Greater London

Radio Broadcast 6.12.96

19 Who Owns Outer Space

Raido AAA

24 Sex in Space

Luthor Blissett

28 Off the Map!

AAA Maya

30 Musings on the Meteorites

33 Raido AAA Vienna Conference Report

Luthor Blissett

41 Bologna Intergalactic Conference Report

52 AAA Rosko Last Appearance Report

67 Mission Accomplished but the Beat Goes On:
the Fantastic Voyage of the AAA

Neil Disconaut

73 It's the End of the AAA as We Know It and I
Feel Fine

Raido AAA

77 333

Riccardo Balli

81 The Final Declaration 23/04/00

Published by Aragorn Moser
Layout by Leona Benton
Printed at "The Compound"
1818 Carleton St. Berkeley, CA 94703-1908

Is Space the Place? Yes

Every child has experienced the wonder of a sky full of stars urging them to flight. Looking up one imagines every sort of adventure and delight just a giant leap away. Then, the promises are confirmed by movies that demonstrate, spectacularly, that the future, possibility, and even spiritual completion are as close as the nearest star. If we are heirs to Manifest Destiny then our future is a Galactic Destiny.

For anarchists the hope represented by the stars is even more specific. In this world, where illusions more convincing than human relationships transform capitalism to a way of life, our ideas do not seem to have the room to sprawl out and be tested. Every inch of this planet seems to serve pre-existing gods, most of them armored against exactly the kinds of proposals we recommend. Try out neolithic ways of life? How about gender equality and/or destruction? Passions and Desires? It seems like all of our experimentation is constrained to our own heads and to moments of crisis. This limits our options to active dreaming (when we confuse dreams with the real) or to being adrenaline junkies (who become irrelevant as soon as we can't run a six-minute mile).

New planets, space, represents a reasonable response to this conundrum. We can align ourselves with utopians of other flavors and together, we can leave this place that seems to have no time or energy for experimentation about what exactly we mean by, and hate about, society.

Beyond a critique of the Space/Military Industrial Complex there is an exciting (but troubling) new scene of people (companies and entrepreneurs) attempting to reach space on the cheap and without the governmental beauracracies that have always been seen as necessary to reach space. Additionally there are other countries that are re-inventing space travel: at the time of this writing there is a Chinese rover on the moon that isn't being discussed in the Anglophone media at all. The grimace-and-bear-it necessary to work with these people/companies is probably more than most anti-authoritarians can take but the work is there and anyone involved today is participating in the early stages of a future worth living in.

Science Fiction, as a category, demonstrates what willful anarchistic sorts of people are capable of (at least in the imagination of their authors). The Mars series by Kim Stanley Robinson (among many others tbh) demonstrates that a new world beyond the

States and authorities of Earth will be a place of more openings and different possibilities than we can imagine when reform, compromise, and negotiation seem to be the alpha and omega of life on this planet.

This question "Is Space the Place?" proposes science fiction. It assumes we have the power to act freely and that with this power we begin to ask questions about how we will inflict ourselves upon the world. Will we be bound to the agreements that make sense in the context of this world around identities and histories of colonization, will we make new agreements based in the ultimate lack of space (of a breathable atmosphere for starters), or will we create a new set of ethics and values once we leave orbit that cannot be imagined while one newton of force presses down on us, every day, all the time.

The answer is obvious. Yes, yes, YES! As wild-eyed utopians we have always seen the stars as our birthright, but as sober scientists of the future order we must put our bodies where our mouths, and minds, are. If we can't create that which is worth living in here, we must go there! Space is the place for us to spread our wings and put our ideas into practice.

PS: Note that these essays are from a

UK organization called the Association of Autonomous Astronauts. They were founded in 1995 with a five year mission to establish a planetary network to end the monopoly by corporations, governments, and the military over travel in space. One aspect of the project was infrastructural mapping, identifying the satellite hardware that links up the world communications network. But another was what Konrad Becker calls "e-scape": "Cracking the doors of the future means mastering multidimensional maps to open new exits and ports in hyperspace; it requires passports allowing voyages beyond normative global reality toward parallel cultures and invisible nations; supply depots for nomads on the roads taken by the revolutionary practice of aimless flight."

The influence of the Situationist International should be apparent.

On Becoming an Autonomous Astronaut

This man spends his life wonderfully! While still a boy, he reads with interest books and stories on astronomy. With his first earned money he buys an astronomical telescope... the name of his daughter is Astra, the name of his son Mercury. Every thought, every step, manifests his aspiration for interplanetary flight!

Pravda editorial 1934

24th May 1962: John Glenn, a US Marine Corps pilot, becomes the second American in orbit. He uses up most of the Aurora 7's fuel supply getting into a good position to photograph sunrises. For this he is severely reprimanded by NASA.

To become an Autonomous Astronaut you don't just need to understand the history of independent space exploration and act accordingly. You must also be something different from the attitudes and values of the society we want to leave behind. We must be ourselves first and foremost--wherever that may take us. The "militant" posturing

so adored by so many puritanical political activists is of no use to the AAA. It is a mind-set that splits the individual into two, separating people's real individual and social needs—the reasons why they cannot stand life on planet earth, from their actions—their attempts to leave this world behind. If the AAA's programme turns into another job, even for one person, then we will have failed utterly.

The militant as an individual, and political groups as organisations, suffer from a sort of displacement of personality—what they want and how they try to get there are two completely different things. That is why our parties are just as valuable as our texts. That is why we move in several directions at once.

The AAA is not a programme that one puts into practice or makes others put into practice, but a social movement. Those of us who develop and defend the AAA's ideas do not have any advantage over others except a clearer understanding and a more rigorous expression; like everyone who is not especially concerned by theory, we feel the *practical* need for establishing autonomous communities in outer space.

We are not leaders or experts—and never will be. People who expect everyone

involved with the network to be able to know about every aspect of space travel are deluding themselves. We cherish the learning process, the dialogue between interested individuals. That is how all of our ideas have developed, and that is how we will achieve our aims. Our training methods reflect this approach—they are as much about social interaction as they are about acquiring skills. Those who project their hopes and desires onto us must understand that they are *involved*—they are astronauts too.

There is no point in some kind of “elite” group of autonomous astronauts getting into space, our trajectories must be open to all. We are not proposing some sort of zero gravity hippie drop-out commune that excludes everyone else.

We do not have the future mapped out, waiting to fall off the shelf when the time is right. We only have a limited idea of what communities in outer space will look like at their beginning, let alone after a hundred years. Finding out is often the best bit, the whole point of the games we play. We are concerned with possibilities and experimentation, not with having the “correct line”, or being right in retrospect. The difficulty lies in the need to go beyond traditional notions of space travel while not

rejecting relevant concepts. It is not enough to understand that NASA, The ESA, and their counterparts in Eastern Europe have nothing in common with what we are trying to achieve. One must also see what has actually changed over the last 60 years, and which aspects of their technology can be adapted in the light of the present situation. Zero gravity communities are at hand, only the inertia of society prevents them from forming. But their basis is there, and we will develop the propulsion to reach them.

The first step is to consider the issues, to engage in dialogue with like-minded people. The AAA's network of groups is a reflection of this stage. Anyone reading this can contribute. We have been conditioned by the media over the last sixty years to place our hopes and aspirations in outer space, but it is only the AAA that has taken up this challenge seriously. As individuals we are isolated, atomised. But if we can come together and pool our ideas and skills then community-based space travel will become not just a possibility, but a necessity. We have been fooled, conned into letting governments and armies get into space on our behalf. Occasionally they will dangle little tit bits in front of us like "life on Mars" or "ice on the Moon," but nothing really

changes. It must be apparent that their interests are not ours. Now is the time for everyone, for all of us here to do it for ourselves—and for each other.

Every man and every woman is an autonomous astronaut.

John Eden
Raido AAA

Interview on Greater London Radio Broadcast on The Robert Elms Show 6/12/96

Today we have a member of the
Association of Autonomous Astronauts.
What?

Chris Sullivan: What?

What? (laughing). Yeah. The Association of
Autonomous Astronauts.

Who are what?

Well, we're a world-wide network of local,
community-based groups, all dedicated to
building our own space ships.

Seriously?

Yeah, very seriously.

'Cause when, er, it had on my bit of paper
"Chris Sullivan coming in with a spaceman,"
which is the sort of thing that they tend to
write on my bits of paper.

Right. Well, what we want to do is destroy
the present day monopoly of space
exploration which is maintained by the
government and corporate or military

interests.

Right.

And basically open it up so that anybody can--

O: Not Chris!

Yeah, Chris if he wants...

C: No, no.

No?

C: No. (laughs)

So come on, Chris, tell me a bit about the literature and stuff you have in front of you.

C: Well, it says at the beginning, here that you often get asked by media hacks if the AAA is all a big joke. But then in your thing here (points at the 1st Annual Report) you have this thing about "Roaches in Space," where you sent two, er, cockroaches into space and it says that practical details such as toilets and physical exercise for the inhabitants of the cabin lead to delays and problems.

Well, the Roaches in Space project was some people in France; I represent a London-based group, so I can't really speak for everyone.

But you are serious about it?

Oh yeah, we are serious about it, and when

people ask if we're a joke or if it's a metaphor for something else we have to tell them "no"

So if there's a group you must have meetings?

Well, as I've said it's a network, and we have a five-year plan that started on April the 23rd, 1995, which was also the official launch of the AAA. And that five-year plan is to establish by the year 2000 a world-wide network of local, community-based groups.

But what's the aim of the organisation? To get you up in rockets?

Well, the immediate aim is to set up that world-wide network. And as a network it allows to travel in several directions at once. In other words we don't have a fixed agenda for how we are going to escape from gravity. If you look at other organisations like NASA, they have to have a very fixed notion of how to travel into space.

They also have to have about 80 billion pounds!
(laughs)

C: That's what I was saying—it's the spondoolicks which will get in the way, somewhat—I would have thought?

Is it an expensive business—space travel?

Well it can be, and at the moment it is. But our response to that is that if you look at the

way that technology has developed over the 20th century, these things eventually become cheaper and more accessible. If you look at computers for example; when the first computer came out in the forties or fifties, it cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. But now you can buy a computer for a fraction of the price and it's far more powerful as well.

You can nip down to Dixons.

Exactly.

What do you do to further your aims? do you design ships? What are your specific kind of...

Well the notion of being able to travel in several directions at once means that we're not only concerned with the technology.

Right.

What makes us different to other space programmes is that we're far more interested in what's going to happen when we actually get out there. We're not just interested in technology itself, we're interested in how the technology is used. We're interested in the new possibilities that are going to open up when we begin to form autonomous communities in space. We're interested in the kind of lives that we're going to be able to construct for ourselves when we get into

zero gravity.

So is there a kind of political/moral aspect to all this?—Is it anarchists in space?

It's not anarchists in space, as I've said we don't have any kind of ideology. We want anyone and everyone to get involved. We see it from the perspective of evolution as well. We think that the next stage in human evolution is to go into space.

Chris has barely escaped from the last stage...

C: Yeah. (Mumbles). I know you told me that these are very serious subjects, but having been sent this thing [the 1st Annual Report], I must quote, it says that at one time we wanted to launch some balloons at the Copper Horse statue outside of Windsor Castle and you couldn't at 3pm because of engine trouble of your cars. I don't think Buzz Aldrin would have been caught in traffic!

Well he obviously didn't have to deal with the M25, did he?

(Laughter) It's true, though, he has a point, Chris. Buzz did have a very different set of problems.

C: And another part of it—a lot of it is on about marital relationships in space. And I quote, one of the things that it says tried to do here: "elastic belts around the thighs of the two partners" (indistinct) "buttocks and groin"--

Ooh! This sounds like it's getting saucy!

I have to explain that. The document that you're referring to is one that we found, allegedly from NASA, talking about how they try and enable people to have sex in space. Now, this is an important aspect to our programme. As far as we know, no-one's actually done it in space, and the document you've just read out from is supposedly a NASA document. They talk about "continuing normal marital relations" in space.

C: What—arguing with your missus, I suppose? (laughs)

Well, we're saying that we're not interested in going into space if all you're going to do when you get there is replicate the same kind of conditions that currently prevail on this planet. Y'know—what's the point? Our sex in space hypothesis is that in zero gravity it's going to be even better. Which is why it's important that we get up there and we conduct certain experiments to test out that hypothesis.

I mean, taking you seriously for a while—and I'm prepared to do that, how far away do you think it is before there are alternative, non-governmental forays into space?

Well, it's already happening.

(Utter disbelief). No! It's not!

It is! In America there are several private enterprise projects aiming to get into space, some of them talk about in the next five years. Recently there's been something called the "X Prize Foundation" started up, which is basically \$10 billion for the first privately-funded spacecraft that gets into sub-orbital flight. So that's not even full orbital flight, but about 100 km.

Would you go, Chris?

C: I don't even like travelling on the tube.

Well, the point I'm trying to make is that people are thinking about these things, but rather than it being controlled by government or corporate or military interests-

Particularly the American government.

-and also simply rather than it becoming an extension of the tourist industry or-

Because that's the other way it's likely to go, isn't it? Hotels in space...

Yeah. There's a Japanese company that's already got plans for building hotels on the moon. And they did a recent survey in Japan and they reckoned there'd be about 800,000 people that would be willing to pay a lot of money-

C: Well, the Japs will go anywhere, eh?

With their cameras, yeah. The point is there is a lot of interest, these things are going to happen, the technology is going to get cheaper and more available and there is a struggle over how that technology is going to be used.

So, how many people are taking part in the struggle from your side? How many members of the AAA?

At the moment (laughs) it's difficult to give you a precise number. I can say that there's about thirteen different groups across the world, that's mainly this country, France, Italy... Scotland as well. And, as I say, by the year 2000 we hope to extend that network across the world—and beyond.

So no-one's sitting at home building suits out of tin foil or anything?

No—we're far more serious than that.

C: And what do you think about the whole hypothesis that the whole space programme, the moon landing, was faked?

My Grandma believed that.

C: Because we had this chap in who's a photographic journalist and he's absolutely convinced that it was a complete and utter

fake.

Well, the only way is for us to build our own spaceships and go up there and check it out.

I'm not going.

C: No, there has to be a bit more on the moon for me.

Food!

C: Food, rather than dust. And beaches.

Night-clubs, clothes shops...

Well, we've got a rave-in-space programme.

(laughs). Really?

Oh yeah, definitely. We've already got people who are researching the kind of music that would be the most appropriate for that kind of environment.

I should really have chosen something like "Star man" or something, shouldn't I? But I thought it would be a cheap shot. So you've got UB40 instead...

(fades to the atrocious "1 in 10")

Who Owns Outer Space?

It is a truism that in current society you can have anything you want, as long as you can afford to pay the price. Everything is one big shop window on planet earth, and for those of us tired of shopping, withdrawal often seems like the best solution. But increasingly, even the avenues of escape are being auctioned off to the highest bidders.

An organisation calling itself the Lunar Embassy¹ is already selling the moon piece by piece. \$16 dollars (plus tax and shipping, of course) will buy you a 1,777 acre patch on the light-side.

...probably the most romantic and original present you could ever give to a loved one. Sharing this gift under a full moon has become the pass-time of many of our clients, romantics and visionaries from all over the world.

The Lunar Embassy boasts 16 years in business and "over 7,000 satisfied customers, including two former US Presidents!". Registered under the US Homestead Act of 1862, their "right" to do this is the ancient swindle yet again:

It's a bit like the old west: Who stakes their claim on a piece of land get the best property....as the Americans were

the first to walk on the moon and plant their flag on it...it could be argued that if the Moon belonged to anyone, it certainly belongs more to the USA than any other nation.

It is, admittedly, early days yet—and we're sure that the legality of this venture will be challenged (not least by the Universal Lunarian Society, who are selling off chunks of the lunar crater Copernicus for \$50 an acre²). It seems likely that the argument will revolve around who owns the moon and planets, rather than if such a concept is desirable in the first place.

The Association of Autonomous Astronauts are trying to achieve new ways of living in outer space. Ways that go way beyond our conceptions of existence on planet earth. Ways that allow people to achieve their full potentials, exercise their imaginations and... well, we don't even know the rest yet.

We've been working towards this aim for two years now and we're only beginning to see the full extent of the possibilities. We're also beginning to see our ideas become co-opted by the powers that be. At the end of last year NASA and the Space Transport Association (an alliance of sixteen aerospace firms)³ signed an agreement "with a view to establishing a space tourism

business"⁴. Dr Jack Mansfield, who signed the agreement for NASA had this to say:

Up till now, space has been a young man's game, an astronaut game, a government game. Soon it will be anybody's game, as costs come down. From now on, NASA is in the business of helping people to make money out of space.

We expect to have our ideas ripped off, but we're far from happy at having them sold back to us at a profit afterwards.

Space Tourism looks like the big thing for the next decade, with early estimates (both Japanese and American) putting flights at the year 2010. Don't hold your breath, though. It looks like another diversion for the oh so world-weary rich. \$4,000 dollars a ticket will gain entry to the proposed "space hotels" which will include all the usual consumables like sports facilities, TV, a low gravity shower, karaoke, and a window view of the Earth⁽⁵⁾. Even when the price inevitably decreases, the prospect of "Butlins" on the moon is too disgusting a waste to contemplate. We don't want to leave the planet only to find another High Street full of WH Smiths and Burger Kings.

The moon is a barren wasteland... sun-bathing is out because there is no ozone

*layer to shield you from radiation.*⁶

Tourism is about maintaining your composure, about bringing your hang ups and parochial attitudes to other places. It is a sterile, pre-packaged adventure to take your mind off the stresses of home. We want to travel, to explore, to take control of our own lives and share our experiences with those we encounter. We want to take chances, not holiday snaps.

The Catholic Church has also entered the picture. Four centuries after burning philosopher Giordano Bruno at the stake for having the temerity to suggest that there may be an infinite amount of planets, they have also teamed up with NASA⁷. Father George Coyne, Director of the Vatican Observatory, is looking for life on other planets—so he can convert them to Christianity. Words fail us!

As ever, the most interesting developments lie outside of the shopping precincts and boardrooms. The street finds its uses for everything. There is already a network of hobbyists building rockets in their garden sheds and garages. A group of hackers working under the name H4G13 managed to bring chaos to NASA's WWW server earlier this year⁸ with a fraction of their computing power and resources. The AAA

doesn't need a business plan to get off the planet—the most powerful rocket fuel we have is the power of imagination.

Smash the hotels! Squat the moon!

Raido AAA

1 <http://www.moonshop.com/>

2 "Space colonists start buying land on moon at \$50 an acre" *Sunday Times*, 5/1/97

3 Possibly the same mysterious sixteen firms involved in the H.O.M.E. project mentioned in the Press Officer's Report? Apparently they include Lockheed, Honeywell, American Express, Northwest Airline, and Hilton Hotels.

4 "Book a Day Trip to the Stars" *Observer Sunday Review*, undated press clipping early 1997

5 "Watch This Space" *Sunday Telegraph*, 4/2/97 & "Japanese Tourists to Blast Off for the Final Frontier" *Guardian*, 11/2/97

6 "Out of this world" - article on space tourism in *High Life* (undated airline magazine)

7 "But could ET believe in God?" *Sunday Telegraph*, 4/2/97

8 "Hackers Pierce NASA Net" *Washington Post*, 7/3/97

Sex in Space

Of all the things people do, at home and in private, usually with close friends, sex alone is subject to extraordinary interference and control from outside forces. This is no accident—everybody is aware of its power. Even if only for a few moments, individuals can release a power and energy from within that renders any system of society, or regime, meaningless. It is a liberator. Even someone in solitary confinement can indulge in it and in their fantasies travel into any situation or possibility unfettered, and, at the moment of orgasm itself, to be both blissfully vulnerable and undeniably free, elsewhere, filled with energy.

The repression of sexual instincts functions to make people submissive and inclined to irrational behaviour and thus paralyses their potential for rebellion and leaving the planet.

Sexuality is as fundamental as it is universal. We have, therefore, found it rather sad that our researches into sex in space have so far turned up very little. NASA's poverty of thought is demonstrated yet again when they push sex right to the bottom of their agenda and even deny it. This is hardly surprising when we consider

that the organisation is made up of engineers and quasi-soldiers. It is a patriarchy like all state-agencies. Ninety percent of all NASA astronauts have been male, even though women make better ones (by and large they eat less, take up less room, need less oxygen, and in zero gravity the need for physical strength is minimal). The first female astronaut wasn't even consulted about her menstrual cycle by the boys in the backroom—they just packed 2 years' supply of tampons on board and scuttled off!

All of the literature we have seen on the subject repeats the dull phrases of efficiency and repression: "astronauts face a workload busy enough to ensure such matters are not a priority. However any future flight to Mars, for example, would take a very long time, and the physical and psychological well-being of the crew may drive this subject onto the agenda.", "in-flight intercourse would help relieve astronauts of the enormous amount of stress they undergo during missions." It is the language of dead, sexless lives, of work making Jack a dull boy.

We have been unable to come up with any references to masturbation in outer space and have therefore surmised that either a) it has occurred but has been covered up,

b) only sexually repressed astronauts are selected,

c) some kind of military equivalent to bromide in tea is being utilised.

However, sex is such a natural, vital part of life that it will emerge regardless...

Whilst NASA will only state that the first married couple to go on a mission together were on the space shuttle Endeavour in September 1992, their counterparts in the former Soviet Union are not so bashful. We have discovered that Svetlana Savicka, a Russian cosmonaut, fucked freely in Jaljut 7 as far back as June 1982. Whilst we applaud this, we are saddened by her bosses' response which was just to initiate a plan to conceive the first child in outer space, as if sex was merely for procreation

The Association of Autonomous Astronauts is eager to promote a meta approach to sex in zero gravity. We reject utterly current space programmes and their prioritisation of work over play, of commerce over pleasure. We believe that sex will be even better in outer space and that it should be freely available for all. One only has to look at any of the numerous fetish magazines to see the immense amounts of creativity that humanity has put into its sexuality, and we expect this to increase in outer space as new

dimensions and possibilities open up.

Elaine Lerner, an American inventor, has already patented a harness to allow one partner to exercise control of the movements of the hips of the other partner during a zero-g fuck. And many bondage enthusiasts are already experimenting with gravity-defying pulleys and ropes to enhance their orgasms. We predict that a whole range of new sexual expression will begin when we form autonomous communities in outer space. Not just the new positions that zero gravity will allow, but whole new ways of relating to each other. Variable gravity will make extremes possible for S&M enthusiasts, and we expect a whole range of new fetishists and pervers to emerge, once free from the restrictions and guilt of planet earth. As we adapt to life without a planet, our bodies and organs may evolve into something else entirely, either through new forms of body modification, or just from living in new environments. The possibilities are limitless.

The AAA is eagerly awaiting the chance to take their bodies to new peaks of pleasure in the depths of space.

Down with restriction! Playtime forever!

Luther Blissett
Raido AAA

Off the Map!

On a recent trip to London, AAA Maya were privileged to participate in what was deemed by certain media sources as "the best dance party in history"¹, and, by those less involved, "riot frenzy"².

It had been advertised as a two day festival of resistance and was partly organised by Reclaim The Streets³.

After a carnival like saunter through London and a bit of excitement outside Downing Street, we arrived to a buzz of anticipation in Trafalgar Square. The arrival of the sound system (expertly driven in, we might add) signalled the rush of raw energy nestling in the heart of all those there, blasting them into a new space.

It is these temporary launch pads that we are interested in. Sound systems are the rhythmic rocket fuel that aid access into spaces where inspiration and ideas are born. The government, unknowingly, is assisting in this evolutionary step. Their denial of basic human social activities has created a current of resistance. This current is becoming more aware that ideas are masks that can be

adopted for the purpose of adopting more ideas. To stake claim to an idea is to be trapped by it. Ideas are held in order to find their opposite, or shadow. Once this is achieved a new space opens allowing new opportunities, ideas and feelings. The old ideas are not just discarded, but much like an old treasured record are put to the back of a pile and played "when the mood fits".

The government's attempt at destroying the rave culture has been responsible for what is probably the largest illegal party this country has ever seen, slap bang in the middle of fuckin' London.

But as all astronauts know, launch pads don't have to be big or loud (space travel is often very quiet).

The setting up of temporary launch pads and the reclaiming of old ones, such as Stonehenge, is fundamental to our evolution.

Dance in the face of gravity!!!

AAA Maya

Notes

1 Mixmag

2 The Express on Sunday

3 In conjunction with the Liverpool Dockers' march.
orted in the New York Times Dec 15th 1960

Musings on the Meteorites

*"Is there life on Mars?
IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?
Is there life in Peckham?"*

Alexei Sayle—Hallo John, gotta new motor? And so yet another wonderful chapter in the history of the universe opens. There's life on Mars! Really? Well, sort of. It's difficult to get to grips with any real analysis amongst so much noise, but we will try.

Someone (NASA) found something (magnetite) in a meteorite (ALH84001) from Mars, or somewhere. And it looks like it might¹ be the sort of thing that a one-celled organism might have left behind if it were wobbling about millions of years ago.

The day before Clinton stood in the White House harping on about the US's "aggressive" space programme being "vindicated" by the find "in these harsh economic times"², his competitor Bob Dole launched his "Republican National Platform" containing a commitment to a manned flight to Mars if elected. (And we're in the middle of pre-election fever at the time of writing...)

The global media then whipped up a frenzy of feel-good reports—often nicely packaged with Hollywood glitz in the shape of footage from the film “Independence Day.” Just as wars and disasters in other countries seem to magically appear to divert attention away from trouble at home, the fossil on the meteorite arrived splat in the middle of “these harsh economic times”.

And before the tests are even completed Russia and the USA are already competing with each other to get to Mars next year³, at an estimated cost of \$150 million per launch.

Why did this exciting revelation occur this year, when NASA was worrying mightily about its budget? And how does this fit in with a 30 year old US Government Report⁴ that suggests that any discoveries of evidence of alien life should be withheld from the general public for some years for reasons of public order?

Government space agencies again show their corruption. The life on Mars spectacle is just another chapter in the history of jingoism, oppression, self aggrandisement and electioneering. Again we see the possibilities for space exploration used like counters in the game of global politics, just like those other counters: war, poverty, starvation and every conceivable form of torture.

The AAA has said time and time again that it is futile to expect any steps towards establishing communities in space from these agencies. They require a population imprisoned on this planet for their very existence.

The point is not whether life existed on Mars millions of years ago. The point is WHAT are NASA and their opposites in Russia and Europe going to USE that knowledge for. The point, as ever, is what kind of life is there for the rest of us while the hypocritical back-slapping in the White House and the top secret military installations continues?

Talking about life on planet earth is like talking about rope in the house of a hanged man.

Raido AAA

1 "New doubt over 'life on Mars' findings" Electronic Telegraph UK News Thursday 3 October 1996

2 Speech at White House on Search for Life on Mars Conference August 7, 1996, 1:34 p.m.

3 NASA launch the "Mars Global Surveyor" 6/11/96. Russia to follow with "Mars 96" on 16/11/96

4 "Proposed Studies on the Implications of Peaceful Space Activities for Human Affairs", Brookings Institute report delivered to the Committee on Long Range Studies, NASA, November 1960. Submitted by NASA to the 87th Congress, 1st Session, April 18, 1961. House Report #242, Serial Set Vol #2, #12338. Reported in the New York Times Dec 15th 1960

Raido AAA Vienna Conference Report

I arrived in Vienna with the representative of Sheffield's Inner Space Agency (ISA) after an enjoyable, but delayed flight. As the underground system had shut down for the day we made our way to Public Netbase by foot. We discussed 80s industrial music, mathematic modelling and whether we were lost. We eventually arrived at Public Netbase feeling pretty exhausted but exhilarated and were welcomed by several autonomous astronauts from London, France and Vienna. We talked for a while and then got our heads down in preparation for the morning.

I slept well and dreamt of deserts, giant butterflies, and strange machines.

Saturday morning was spent planning our activities, welcoming others and exploring the environment. Vienna was a welcome change from London. Some of us had a wander round to get some supplies and take it all in. The verdict was "pretty, if over regimented."

We returned to Public Netbase for

lunch. The complex is situated in the centre of Vienna, with the rest of the Museums, which meant we were sleeping within a stone's throw of both the supposed Spear of Destiny and several Bosch paintings. Net-base struck me as a pretty cool place to be—nice kitchen, loads of ISDN terminals, nice people.

After eating, we headed over to the hall where the conference was being held. It was impressively big. A pyramidal spaceship had been constructed in the centre of the hall and local kids from the Kinder Museum had decorated it in the weeks leading up to the conference. The decor inside the ship was suitably psychedelic (in stark contrast to the interior of NASA spaceships which are dull as fuck). The ship included a number of monitors and other artefacts, and a platform for various uses (this was later used for skinning up by some delegates during the rave in space training). A representative from Inner City AAA had been working with some of the kids to develop a website outlining their philosophies for living in space. I found the visual elements to be very interesting, but was unable to decipher much of the text because it was (naturally) in German. However Raido AAA delegates were pleased to find a number of parallels with the kids' ideas to our

own. They had collectively decided to name the ship "Achtung! Wir Kommen!" (AWK), which translates as "Watch out! Here we come!" An admirable sentiment! Some of the afternoon was spent talking to the kids about subjects as diverse as life in space, skateboarding, music and going to school in Austria and England. They were well into it.

Other than the spaceship the hall also contained

- A wall display of AAA propaganda and conference details.
- A Bar
- A number of ISDN terminals in suitably "alien" shells.
- An information, literature and merchandise stall.
- A stack of video monitors playing AAA training films and other material (like the Sun Ra film)
- A stage with a number of screens, mics, a lectern, record and CD decks and mixers.

Public Netbase had excelled themselves with the conference brochure, a huge poster with AAA texts printed on the reverse. When exploring the town we saw that many of them had been fly-posted around the place. A special conference edition of *Escape from Gravity* had also been produced, and a

number of special conference t-shirts had been printed by Inner City AAA with a "Space Travel By Any Means Necessary" slogan on the front and the conference logo on the back. There were two cool kids from the Kinder Museum wearing these t-shirts doing door duties. They fluctuated between welcoming the parents of the kids involved in making the ship, and skateboarding around like demons.

Saturday afternoon was the official launch of the AWK ship and some TV crew and other media people showed up to check it out. DJ Pita had been brought in to provide sounds for the occasion, which was great for our own John Eden because he went to school with him. In fact the tapes Pita did for John about 12 years ago probably play a large part in the poor bloke's twisted outlook now. The kids danced and ran about like kids damn well should, but some of the rather more mature people present seemed a little unnerved by the wall of sound, and Pita's set was cruelly curtailed.

There was much speculation amongst the delegates on the long term effects of AAA ideas on such a bright, creative selection of young astronauts—we await the next few years with interest!

The evening saw a number of speakers take the stage. The proceedings were introduced and compered by Konrad Becker of Public Netbase. The running order was as follows. An Inner City AAA delegate gave a talk introducing the ideas and history of the AAA. It was well received.

Next up was Fiorella Terenzi, who was billed as "a cross between Carl Sagan and Madonna". I found her presentation style interesting, but the content was of little use to our group. Fiorella is interested in the vibrations of the universe. She talked us through some basic astronomy and physics with some CD-Roms she had produced as a visual aid. The actual sounds made by the vibrations she has studied were a great selection of gargantuan rumbling and harsh frequencies. I was pleased to hear that Fiorella had been inspired to produce her own music by the sounds. Unfortunately the results were (in my opinion...) cobblers tinkly ambient dolphin crystal-healing unicorn music. A shame. The rest of her talk took a similar turn—a rather new-agey feel. Nevertheless, she has presence and it was in good contrast to the rest of the evening!

Professor Werner W Weiss from the University of Vienna spoke about the history of science and space travel. I'm not sure

what he made of the rest of it, but it was quite funny watching him try to frame the proceedings in some kind of academic context, even one presented to lay-people. He droned on a bit, but I liked him.

The Inner Space Agency delegate was unsure whether he would present a talk at all, but came up with the goods after being bribed with beer tokens. It was an excellent discourse that took in Marxist theory, slag heaps, (un)employment and space. Heartfelt and to the point. An introduction to the talk appears in issue 3 of *Autotoxicity* magazine.

Die Institut für Langstreckenflüge presented a video report concerning the isolation of outer space travel which was entertaining and surreal.

A Raido AAA delegate gave a talk on the AAA and the media which was accompanied by drunken exclamations off stage from other people involved with the group. Cheeky buggers.

An East London AAA delegate gave a talk on how the AAA is heralding a new cultural renaissance.

Some activists from a local radio station presented a video of their training activities for getting into space do broadcast their shows from a satellite. This was an excellent surprise—they just showed up and the video

was a great mixture of low budget humour and creativity. A representative of the group gave a short talk explaining what they were trying to do. One of the delegates approached them for a copy of the video, but this hasn't arrived at the time of writing. They interviewed me about the conference for their station.

The rave-in-space training event followed the talks and was just the right combination of hedonism and confusion. A special mention should be made here for DJ's Scud and Christoph who were hardcore enough to see the thing through until sunrise. I think I crashed out at about 2, but this can only be an estimate because of the inevitable temporal-distortions that accompany such activities. For this reason I am unable to recall the subject matter of my dreams that night.

Sunday morning was spent recovering from the rigours of our hectic training schedule. Odds things were afoot. The ISA delegate noticed an absolutely incredible number of grand pianos being loaded onto trucks in the courtyard where we were staying. Closer examination revealed that they weren't even real pianos anyway, more like props for some weird show involving masses of pianos.

We had planned to go to the moon on Sunday afternoon but this was cancelled after our hosts revealed that this sort of activity would be halted by instant police intervention. Despite this, we were able to play a fast and furious game of three-sided football in the courtyard of the museums. The delegates that were unfamiliar with the game got into it swiftly, and all attempts at bi-polar competition were thwarted. The rest of the afternoon was spent having a picnic and talking to journalists. The Raido AAA posse decided that the proposed astral projection workshop would be hazardous given the fatigue of many of the trainees. Instead, the weekend was rounded off by chilling out at a local restaurant, swearing at Alec Empire on TV, and playing with Netbase's rather wonderful techno-toys.

There was a child-like "fairy tale" variety to my dreams that night. I recall that jumping friendly fruit was involved, as was the kid's TV presenter Johnny Ball.

I flew back to the UK at some indecent time in the morning the next day.

Luthor Blissett

Bologna Intergalactic Conference Report

The Association of Autonomous Astronauts' second Intergalactic Conference was held on the 18th and 19th of April in Italy. Groups from all over Europe descended on the zodiacal city of Bologna under the auspices of consolidating their plans for community-based space exploration.

Most of the delegates stayed in a villa overlooking the city on the first night. It turned out to be the location where Pasolini shot his infamous *120 Days of Sodom*. Fatigue prevented us from re-enacting our favourite scenes from the film, with the notable exception of one member of East London AAA who partied with a vengeance until the early hours (but the less said about that, the better).

We spent a pleasant morning in the grounds of the villa, getting to know each other better and taking it all in. After a huge lunch that had been prepared by Andrea MU B we got to the Link Centre and began our preparations. The Link is an old chemical storage warehouse that now contains studios, infoshop, café and so on.

The conference poster was a large glossy affair with AAA texts in Italian on the reverse. Wall displays were put up, including Disconaut AAA's rather wonderful A-Z of space flight. We constructed a stall selling AAA texts, t-shirts and records by the registration table, and also displayed some artwork and other material.

Some Luther Blissetts showed up at some point in the afternoon, and we discussed the controversy surrounding "their" latest book *Lasciate che i bimbi* in which "they" expose the hysteria behind a recent Satanic Ritual Abuse trial in Bologna which saw two people falsely imprisoned after the usual bogus accusations of child abduction, etc. Luther is now being sued for libel and is starting a campaign of solidarity.

The Conference officially began at 4 pm with registration. This saw some of Italy's finest arriving at the Link with tales to tell and questions to ask. A 28-page conference reader had been prepared by Bologna AAA which included Italian translations of the Conference texts.

Riccardo Balli of Bologna AAA introduced the proceedings and compered the event.

John Eden (Raido AAA) laid down some basic ideas on how to become an

autonomous astronaut.

Lola Chanel (AAA Wien) spoke on the (tiny and tokenistic) role of women in governmental space exploration programmes, illustrating her talk with examples from *Time* magazine.

Ewan Chardronnet (Rosko AAA) expounded the latest strategies for elliptical action.

Andi Freeman (Oceania AAA) presented an excerpt from his work "On Filming Large Objects in the Sky" which tore into post-modern fluffiness and proposed a way forward without it.

Next up was a representative of Rome's Men In Red (MIR) group—an ultra-left grouping that had stormed the stage of a ufology conference the week before. The talk put forward their ideas about joining with aliens to demolish capitalism, but degenerated into sniping at the AAA and our supposed escapism and reformism. This met with a certain amount of amusement and irritation from the Italian AAA delegates and a heated debate ensued. The non-Italian speaking delegates proposed that the argument be continued later (and also translated).

After the scheduled break, Neil (Disconaut AAA) presented a summary of

political, cultural and scientific events in the space race since the last conference. Konrad Becker (Wien AAA) talked on Harry Houdini, magick, and lock-picking the future. Jason Skeet—(Inner City AAA) gave us a psychogeographical update on the progress of the Grub Street launch site. Andreas MU B—(AAA Trento) critiqued the dominant scientific paradigm. Finally Patric O'Brien (East London AAA) rounded off by telling us about the forthcoming Reclaim The Stars event and the Giordano Bruno connection.

The debate with the Men In Red then recommenced in earnest. Riccardo did his best to translate in what was a fairly hectic situation. Essentially MLR's position seems to be that humanity is tarnished with "micro-fascism" and will simply take this into space unless capitalism is destroyed beforehand. Their priority is to join up with aliens and fight the revolution on earth. To which the obvious responses are:

i) Why wait for aliens to arrive when we can build our own spaceships and go and find them?

ii) Why assume that some "other" type of creature needs to help us when we can liberate ourselves? (And why assume that aliens will have ideas identical to the Italian

autonomist movement?)

iii) Why bring noxious ideas like "micro-fascism" into the debate, which just sound like the Christian idea of Original Sin?

The Men In Red, like all politicians, want us to stay firmly on planet earth until the time is "right". In this they are exactly the same as state agencies like the church (who want us to behave until we get to "heaven"), government (who need us to pay taxes), or army (who want us to spectate as they destroy not only this planet, but also the rest of the galaxy).

In astronomy, a revolution is what occurs when an object returns to its point of origin. Back to square one. The AAA is not content with the rhetoric of the past. We wish to move beyond it, into an arena where everything is possible, where we move in several directions at once to create a life based on possibilities rather than constrictions. As part of this process we expect to develop new ways of social interaction that will suppress capitalist relations.

One of MIR's problems is that they treat the AAA as a single thing. If we were some kind of cult where everyone shared exactly the same sort of viewpoint this might be a worthwhile pursuit (it works with a lot of

other groups). However, the AAA revels in contradiction and a diversity of trajectories. To accuse us of escapism is missing the point entirely. There are far too many people on this planet pissing their lives away waiting for the "glorious day" or dreaming up new ideological straitjackets that prevent them from opening even their front door. That, for us, is the real escapism. We offer a practical way forward.

We would like to make it clear that it isn't our intention to zip off into space to form some kind of hippie dropout commune. Our trajectories must be open to all. Our message to the Men In Red remains: Revolutionaries p; one more effort to become autonomous astronauts!

[Editor's note: Later on the waters were further muddied by rumours that the Men In Red were actually nothing of the sort. We have been unable to confirm or deny the story that they are really transvestites satirising the Italian left, but this does present some interesting contradictions to be examined in the future. We know that you can learn more from wearing a dress for a day than a spacesuit for a year. Either way, we wish them well in their efforts to introduce class consciousness to the foggy world of ufology. But their positions on autonomous

space exploration are incoherent.]

The rave in space training commenced at midnight. There were three spaces for music, and many others for discussion, drinking, or other merriment.

The Rave In Space Room catered for the most extreme of tastes. Parisian AAA DJs Overkill, Lo Lascar, Golgoth and The Liner whipped up the crowd into a frenzy with their abrasive dance sets. There was also a live Amiga-core frenzy inna 8-bit stylee from Xkvate.

London was well represented by The Society of Unknowns with a selection taking in drum 'n' noise and tech step. There was also a surprise guest slot by Boris Karloff and DJ Jackal who took the chance to play some extracts from their forthcoming Hammer House of Horror box set.

Bologna AAA hosted the Anti Ambient Area and spanned experimental techno, speedcore, and electro with guest act Space Oddities—Cyber Zombie 200 (Wien AAA) who mashed the place up with their accelerated beats.

The Jump-Up room (hosted by Mix The Lot) was dismissed by some of the delegates for being "too commercial". However, it did provide a critical mass of people ready for take off, and it made a change from being

pummelled by the frequencies in the other rooms.

Many trainees defied gravity as part of the evening's proceedings. At 7 o'clock in the morning, those remaining on planet earth looked like they had had a rough time during re-entry. Over one thousand people had attended and the night was considered a great success by all.

We stayed in a secret chamber of a local astronaut's flat.

When we regained consciousness later in the day, the conference had already recommenced.

Oceania AAA were continuing their Radio Free Earth Project on the roof of the Link Centre:

A Trillion Channels And Nothing On

The current failure of the SETI project is unsurprising. Loaded with technical and existential assumptions it represents an icon of cold war mentality. The recent development of the trillion channel SERENDIP IV listening supercomputer (of which three are to be made. One of them is to be deployed in Bologna.) represents an opening up of this field as teams outside of the SETI mentality get access to the equipment. However, the AAA is not prepared to simply sit, listen and wait. We propose an active programme of at-

tempts to communicate with other planets.

PROJECT Postcards For 51 Pegasus
Radio Free Earth began its narrowcasts into new spaces on June 23rd 1997. As part of its summer season of broadcasts to the stars ('100 light years of entertainment') RFE intends to point its data transmitters to 51 Pegasus as part of the AAA's 2nd Galatica Conferenza in Bologna.

Images and sounds that had been collected prior to the conference were zapped into outer space by the Oceania delegation. Give the enormous distances involved, it is perhaps to be expected that no responses have been received as yet. Further information, technical details and updates are available from Oceania AAA.

The game of three-sided football was well attended despite the uncharacteristically cack weather. A certain Inner City AAA delegate managed to surpass his long record of downright sneakiness (yeah, OK—he conned me) by switching sides on at least five occasions. A few passers-by were encouraged to join in, but this wasn't too successful because of the weather and language difficulties.

A discussion followed the game, along with coffee and ice cream. Some of us talked

about pushing the three-sided football thing forward by using it in contexts that appealed to people less confident (or physically capable) of football. There was concern about the AAA being overly identified with hardcore music—a broader approach was hoped for at future events. Which brought us nicely to the question of where to hold future conferences. As yet nothing is certain, though locations in London, Brittany, and Kazakhstan are being looked into.

Several delegates left that night to go to Vienna in time to participate in the Information Terror event organised by Public Netbase.

The conference was very successful on many levels. The concept of a period of consolidation has so far proved far less difficult than many had thought. Despite moving in several directions at once, those present were able to agree on a number of key issues, and get on socially. We established many new contacts, firmed up links with existing ones and left Italy full of ideas for the future.

We are focused on intensifying our five-year programme to establish a world-wide network of local, community-based groups dedicated to building their own spaceships. We are now well over the half way mark and

our success has exceeded the imaginations of even the most lucid dreamers amongst us. We will not stay on planet earth and be restricted to its narrow possibilities for existence. We want to forge new paths, new ways of living. The development of autonomous zero gravity communities is only the beginning. The AAA is bored of the city and, realising that real life lies elsewhere, has set the controls for the heart of outer space.

AAA Rosko Last Appearance Report

After the launch of the Guyana Project (and AAA Guyana) on the 21st of June (summer solstice 2000), AAA Rosko started to debate the imposed dissolution by Seeyouinspace.org. AAA Rosko succeeded in its Four and a Half Year Plan and its so-called self-historification project. So, AAA Rosko gave its last appearance on the 6 of July, at the World-Information.org Event in the Brussels 2000 Centre, and then dissolved itself to enter the Guyana Free Space Base of the Autonomous Astronauts.

We arrived at Brussels Midi Station at 16H20 on Thursday 6th of July, year 2000 of the Christian Era. During the trip we had talked about various technical aspects of that night's musical performance. We ran through the use of two record turntables, two Amigas and a microphone connected to "spacevoice" multi-effects. We decided to create a "Supersonic Space manoeuvres" atmosphere that moves in several directions at once, by giving an impression of always changing our trajectories.

We also talked during the trip about various books and writers that deal with the new 4th dimension strategy (which I will explain below), like Valerio Evangelisti from Bologna (Urania Prize in Italy, Eiffel Prize and Imaginaire Prize in France) and his fourth part of Nicholas Eymerich's adventures, where the inquisitor meets Wilhelm Reich somewhere lost in a space-time bubble between the USA in 1954 and the Sardegna six hundred years before. Orgone energy and uchrony. Then we talked about P.K. Dick's work on uchrony and his surprising conclusions about Parousy developed in his last conferences. Ubald gave me also a book from Abelio entitled "Theory of the new gnose" outlined by his own dead father. We also laughed a lot, talking about the Guyana Project, Jean-Louis Costes and Desir Clinique.

So, we arrived at 16H20 at Brussels 2000. We said to Simon Aranzi (a tall and dark-haired guy with glasses) from World-Information.org, that we would wear 333 extension orange t-shirts to be easily recognised. And so it came to pass.

We went quickly to the 4x4 car outside the station. During the trip to the Brussels 2000 Centre, listening to Lebanese music, we were surprised to be asked this question about the AAA.

So, the AAA is dissolved, I don't understand. Jason Skeet presents himself as a former autonomous astronaut, and generally English guys when they've got something new, they did it a second time to get the hype?

I answered that the AAA will not really disappear, this is simply another English strategy to get hype. We will not stop, and Jason Skeet will probably not stop either. Then we talked a bit about the Brussels architecture and town centre and shortly arrived at the Brussels 2000 Centre.

The Centre Hall is quite large, with an infoshop on the left, a bar on the right and a scene at the front. Three big digital screens provide a welcome message to World-Information Exhibition, "BUILD THE NEW INFORMATION ORDER."

We left our equipment in the exact middle of the hall, near the tables and monitors that were already installed, centred between the speakers, and open under a large window, 5 floors above, with a big rocket than could fall on our heads. We saw that the dominant colour was orange (with long sofa installed), the colour of the 333 extension. We concluded that we were well dressed in the correct colour scheme.

We took the elevator with Simon to the third floor, to join the World-Information staff office. A fake ONU flag is there, mixed with a t0 logo. In the office various Cultural Intelligence Agents welcomed us, especially Marie Ringler, aka Lola Chanel from AAA Vienna (the true zero-G girl), with a big smile. We met Sophie, Rudy, Simon of course, and behind, others persons, and of course Konrad Becker from AAA Vienna (and Director General of World-Information.org).

After we exchanged a few words about the journey, Konrad decided to take charge of the technical aspects of the installation for the night. The Future Heritage Music Event will present a sonic base for pilots, a big screen behind XKV8 with the AAA Rosko launch site (<http://espaceaaa.ctw.net>) and also on two digital screens, one near the bar, the other near the infoshop. After sorting out all the technical aspects, we returned to the office. We had a talk with Lola about Riccardo Balli's book, "Anche Tu Astronauta", and she said that she was very upset about the imposed dissolution of the AAA, and that we must talk quickly about that. She took it very emotionally. I gave her an AAA Rosko internal report, and she laughed, talking about "self-historification materials".

Then, Konrad suggested that we should

have a quick look at the exhibition on the fourth and fifth floors.

We arrived at the fourth floor together and went through the telesurveillance control (with finger prints and face recognition), considering that we are part of the exhibition. First, Konrad showed me the 17th Century Leibnitz calculating machine (the expensive object of the exhibition) and the general information poster. Then we went through the geopolitical posters, looking at the first IBM calculator, the biotechnology implants, various posters about body attack, info body, revolution in the military and control affairs (various things that AAA Rosko talked in *Gravite Zero* bulletin 8), etc...

Then we entered a dark cube called 'para-information' with various leaflets about science, activist groups, millenarist revolutionaries, occultism, conspiracies, etc... from Invisible College, Unpopular Books, *Gravite Zero*, etc... Then we arrived in the Future Heritage Area, with various installations like: Captain Euro from rtmark (an activist group against copyright), Apsolutno, Cult of the New Eve by Critical Art Ensemble (about genome research), Earshot (a sound application) by Andy Freeman and Jason Skeet, etc... That is the fourth floor.

On the fifth floor, (the You're Always Being Monitored and Global Control floor), I was surprised when Konrad presented me to the telesurveillance control (finger prints and face recognition) by saying "he's a former autonomous astronaut." But considering that it is a controlled area, I understand I need to be a "former" one to enter the area... So, we found various surveillance screens, an installation from Foton records, from Monochrom (Austria), an old secret service office as in the first James Bond movies with microphones and cameras in the plants, under the telephone, etc... Then a video library, an installation of Airport surveillance and satellite surveillance on two big screens, and the complete base piloted by Marko Peljhan from Atol Project (Ljubljana, the person who helped AAA Vienna to succeed in zero-G flight). Then an Iridium Satellite Model (I say to Konrad that's a famous scandal as AAA tried to talk about it in Gravite Zero 9), a W-I special videogame on two big screens, and finally the AAA installation.

Here is the English presentation (the French is badly translated) from the AAA installation:

SEE YOU IN SPACE

The Association of Autonomous Astronauts (AAA) was a planetary network of people

dedicated to the development of their own independent space exploration programmes.

Launched in April 1995, the AAA fought against the government, corporate and military monopoly of space travel. With the climax to the AAA's successful Five Year Plan for building a world-wide network of local, community-based groups, autonomous astronauts have been debating a proposal that the AAA should now dissolve itself.

A new phase of AAA self-historification has also been initiated, in which autonomous astronauts can organise for themselves AAA documentation and consider the complex achievements of the AAA.

Contradictory and divergent assessments emerge that will prevent a fixed and static history of the AAA.

AAA self-historification materials included at world-information.org

- AAA portable dome tent for installation in any location
 - various AAA propaganda documents hung from the inside of AAA dome tent
 - AAA rave in space dance music
 - AAA International Space Station website hosted by <http://www.seeyouinspace.org>
- The Seeyouinspace website is cool, the music is playing all through the day. Various bulle-

tins like: *Escape from Gravity*, *Superfly*, *Suspension in Reality*, *Gravite Zero*, *Ad Astra*, etc... I add some French leaflets like "Mir Station to the Autonomous Astronauts!", etc...

My major problem is that this installation represents a collective effort on the monopoly on space exploration. But the installation uses the past tense and nobody signs it in their own name. Exactly like other installations, the dome tent is signed as AAA, Jason Skeet has already his own Earshot project with Andy Freeman in the exhibition, Konrad Becker is part of W-I staff. So, there is a confusion between a single vision and the collective aspect. It looks like a one-way self-historification project, and kind of hold-up of the existing groups—crypto-leaders took the decision for us, maybe wanted to create an effective 'shock' of the Autonomous Astronauts... I still plan to play music at the AAA night...

Anyway we decided to go back to the office and to have dinner before the concert and have a talk between AAA Rosko and AAA Vienna. We found a Turkish restaurant and ate houmous and pitas. Lola Chanel told us about her trip to Russia to climb in a zero-G training plane. I talked about future strategies from the point of view of AAA Rosko. I also talked about AAA Guyana. We agreed not to dissolve the network.

We then returned to the Centre and quickly began the concert. The crowd was not so huge considering that there was a big rock and tekno festival in Dour near Brussels... Anyway we introduced the concert with the *Rave In Space* CD, listening to the Desir Clinique, Nocturnal Emissions, and Benoit Direct tracks. Then we played drum 'n' noise and convulsive rhythms with Ubald shouting in the spacevoice microphone. I played records from Ambush, Cavage, Kool Pop, Praxis, Hangars Liquides, etc...

Then Ubald started the supersonic space manoeuvres on the Amigas and I took the mouse of the webPC to make a special show of websurfing with espaceaaa. AAAA Cosmos was efficient with 'Fear, Obey, Enjoy' mouth of Gigabrowser, A.R.T. (Art-Religion-Terror) from AAA Paris Nord too, millions of stars too. I surfed on costes.org from AAA Guyana and that seemed to surprise various people (including Konrad), with Art Guerrilla, Eclipse or 'It makes no difference'... Harmony with nature... I also tried Space Station Homeless (not an AAA one) and it was successful too. The music went faster and faster until the end's explosion at 333 bpm and more, with noise, 2001 original soundtrack, electronic grindcore, weird tekno...

After the concert, we quickly decided to

go to the Apartment with Evelyne and Konrad to have a good sleep (we think that maybe we drank too much). Ubald and Laure (AAA 333 XKV8) followed their own trajectory.

That was the last appearance of AAA Rosko.

So, perhaps it is a good moment to talk about some of the new Autonomous Astronauts strategies that seem to be appearing in the year 2000.

The Autonomous Astronauts International Space Station (ISS)/seeyouinspace.org and five-year plan one-way self-historification project.

In this project, the strategy is to escape from the AAA and show it as a movement started 23/04/95, that comes from the past to be efficient in the future. With old concepts of the 20th century like: a Five Year Plan, a caricature of the famous Bolshevik strategy during the dictatorship in Russia in the 30s, and also used by the national space agencies during the cold war; the "psychogeography" concept, a culture of deriving promoted by old avant-garde groups like Lettrists or Situationnists run by Guy Debord and others in the 50s and 60s, from Sputnik to the moonlanding; the Dionysus Program and Disco's influences

from the 70s and end of cold war, that represents the B-side of the Apollo program; a "Rave In Space" concept that shows how AAA can laugh about the false myth of the "Golden age" of the early 90s tekno: Space is the Place!; sex in space—AAA's successful investigations in 95-96 (and its recent achievement); three-sided football matches of the AAA, a concept opposed to the bipolarity of classic two-sided football; etc... (<http://www.seeyouinspace.org>).

The three-sides concept is related to a certain notion of "triolectics"... which overthrows the old notion of "dialectics"... Everybody knows that since we entered the 20th century, the notion of dialectics (developed by Hegel and Marx) was already old (but the fight against the Law of Value is still necessary), especially when Albert Einstein introduced in the 20s, the 4th dimension, Time, in physics theory (that influenced lots of avant-garde artists, sci-fi writers and poets in their works). Even when Niels Bohr introduced the relativity of the observer with the quantum theory in Copenhagen during the 30s, the 4th dimension started to be overthrown too... Now mathematicians are trying to give a definition of the 5th dimension...

The 333 Extension

In this project, we extend the 5YP for 333 days until the launch by Gerard Z, the free-lance occultist and alleged founder of the AAA, of the Pimax technology, a kind of parapsychic structure of esoteric space technology that tries to capture the cosmic forces until lift-off at 333 bpm. In this extension, it will be very interesting to talk about the 4th dimension, Time. That will be a great moment for the AAA to deal with science-Fiction (and show how we can talk about it and still remain serious) and plurality of temporal worlds. Like works about Uchrony (parallel worlds and space-travel) by Evangelisti from Bologna, work by Riccardo Balli in the novel "333", AAA books and videos, and the GZ festival and various AAA events. This great notion of Practical Time Travel will show the necessity of a quatuorlectical evolution. (<http://www.echodesign.net/mattia/333/>).

The Zero Gravity Theatre Project

In this project, the plan is to introduce Autonomous Astronauts into national space agency training flights to become effective astronauts and to study from the inside how to destroy completely the monopoly of space exploration. Lola Chanel has already

succeeded (with the ATOL project) in taking part in a zero-G flight from Star City in Russia. This project definitively proves that the AAA is not a metaphor.

StopStarWars strategy

The Stop Star Wars strategy seems to have appeared two years ago in the AAA network. This strategy shows how some AAA goals have been shifting (AAA was not supposed to be a classical 'militant' movement and to develop independent space programmes by building our own spaceships). During the Space 1999 festival in London, AAA-ers protested in front of arms manufacturer Lockheed Martin's building, with the slogan "Stop Star Wars, military out of space". Stopstarwars.org is a web site of "Greenpeace" movement. For the moment, the plan is to take part in the global 7th of October movement against the militarisation of space. (<http://www.globenet.free-online.co.uk/index.htm>).

The Kiwi Astronauts

AAA Aotearoa launched a Mars Mission for Autonomous Astronauts. They already organise training sessions in New Zealand for the Mars Landing. (<http://www.oldfarm.co.nz>).

The Guyana Free Space Base Project

Autonomous astronauts now have a free space base in Guyana's jungle (thanks to the efforts of AAA Guyana). The plan is to organise a trip to Guyana to shoot a movie near the Kourou launch pad in September 2001. The movie will present an AAA press conference in the jungle, an Autonomous Astronauts' protest on the ESA launch pad, and a trip into the jungle with crazy astronauts... The movie will be a mad one (half fiction, half true), utilising the influence of Stirner's autonomia concept, Artaud's Attrocity Theatre, Porno-Social, Sub-commandante Marcos and Gerard Z, Herzog's Aguirre, and of course the AAA... Guyana Free Space Base will be also a web site. The final plan is to free Guyana and the Kourou launch pad. (<http://espaceaaa.ctw.net>).

Here is my vision of a few strategies (others exist) of the AAA for the future. We must work on the necessity of distancing ourselves from militant or lobbying movements and more in an analytic way (as AAA Vienna proved in World-information.org). But an association will not be necessary anymore in the future. Autonomous Astronauts created a social movement everywhere on planet Earth.

OUR GOALS REMAINS THE ABUNDANCE OF
THE UNEXPECTED

Ewen Chardronnet
for AAA Rosko

Mission Accomplished but the Beat Goes On: the Fantastic Voyage of the AAA¹

*Why the blue silence, unfathomable
space?*

*Why the golden stars, teeming like
sands?*

*If one ascended forever, what would
one see up there?*

Arthur Rimbaud,
Soleil et Chair/Sun and Flesh, 1870

What would it be like to step into space? Beyond earth's gravity, its economy, its laws, what wonders would we discover? What unknown pleasures would we stumble across on our trip to the stars? The mission of the AAA has been to attempt some tentative answers to these questions.

Our criticism of state and commercial space agencies has been precisely that they have been closed to the new possibilities of space. Instead of relishing the eruption of the marvellous they have attempted to smother it with all the baggage they have

dragged behind them from earth—money, power, heroism. The Space Industry is like Michael Moorcock's *Singularity...* *forever seeking to impose its simplified and sterile laws upon multiversal variety, against whom are ranged the Chaos Engineers who delight in all forms of experience*².

With a tiny fraction of their resources the Chaos Engineers of the AAA have travelled much further in the past five years than NASA & co. have done in almost fifty years of space exploration. Despite this a common reaction to the AAA has been that we were creating some kind of grand metaphor. Of course what we were doing did pose broader questions about the use of technology, the struggle over space with a small 's', and so on. But we have also seriously engaged with Space—experiencing zero gravity, talking to interesting members of the British Interplanetary Society and dissident space researchers like Millennium Twain, and directly confronting the militarisation of outer space.

Yes we were serious, and have demonstrated that community-based space exploration is really possible. But we have never let the present social and political barriers to its full development stand in the way of experiencing some of its wonders in

the here and now. This is why the AAA has put so much effort into creating situations where people have been able to step outside of their usual roles and try things they have never done before. Sometimes we have referred to these as training sessions, but really they have been less about preparation for some future task than about prefiguring the actual experience of being in space. Put simply the AAA has created its own space where interesting things have happened.

In many ways the AAA mode of operation has in itself been an experiment in collective elaboration of ideas. From somewhere in South London a notion spread and a network developed. Each new connection added its own ingredients to the mix so that what emerged was an unpredictable and constantly shifting creation that refused to be confined to art, science, music, politics, magic or any other specialist category, and that crossed the arbitrary borders dividing our home planet. Of course there are examples in literature of disparate writers creating a shared world (the Cthulos mythos developed by HP Lovecraft and others springs to mind), but the AAA has never been confined to the realms of fiction. A closer parallel might be the Church of All Worlds in the

US which started out from the pages of Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* and became an actually existing and influential eco-pagan group moving (in several directions) away from the author's dubious vision.

The AAA assembled its own tool box of techniques, dreams and ideas between which numerous unexpected connections arose. Disconaut AAA undertook our own survey of possibilities with our "Means of flight: an alphabet for autonomous astronauts" from Alchemy to Zebedee. But the ground covered in this was scarcely more fantastic than some of the real combinations of people and places that emerged. Children building their own full size model of a spaceship in Vienna... grown-ups playing on swings and roundabouts... passers-by getting to grips with the intricacies of three-sided football in Hyde Park and Honor Oak... walking into the office of Lockheed death corporation wearing a space suit.... raves in space in Bologna and elsewhere... a motley crew of marxists, musicians and the curious being put through their astral aerobics by a ritual magician on Hampstead Heath.... balloons, airplanes, Space 1999 costumes, vinyl, video, endless e-mail rants about communism, art and Zoe Ball...

So why stop now? Well even the wildest of adventures can become routine, startling ideas clichés and the most radical gestures a source of light entertainment. Space imagery has become increasingly banal and retro, featuring in numerous adverts and pop videos. We don't want to be the space industry's court jesters when capitalism itself is being openly contested, as seen in Seattle and the City of London in the last year.

The AAA has been a radical movement from the future operating in the present—now the present is catching up with us. Already we are seeing mass opposition developing to the militarisation of space (see the recent action at Menwith Hill in Yorkshire) in and before long space will become a major arena for all kinds of social struggle³. As the first space mutineers jettison their bosses and head out into the galaxy to create new autonomous communities they will tell stories to their children about those who saw it all coming, way back in the 1990s. Or perhaps, like in the film *Terminator*, they will send help back into the past—to 1995 to be precise—to form a network dedicated to community-based space exploration, thus setting in motion a chain of events leading to their eventual success.

*But look at the sky!—It's too small for us
If we feared dying of heat, we'd stay on
our knees*

Arthur Rimbaud,
Le Forgeron/The Blacksmith, 1870

Neil Disconaut

Notes

1 Mission Accomplished... but the Beat Goes On is the title of the Rezillos LP recorded live at their 1978 farewell gig in Glasgow. The Rezillos were responsible for such Disconaut faves as Destination Venus and Flying Saucer Attack. [up]

2 Michael Moorcock, Blood: a Southern Fantasy (1995). [up]

3 For information on this check the website of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, www.globenet.free.on-line.co.uk [up]

It's the End of the AAA as We Know It and I feel fine

or

Objections to the 333-Day Extension

*The AAA is the cradle of autonomous
space exploration.*

*But humanity cannot remain in the
cradle forever*

Tsilovsky

Raido AAA have left the building. After April 23rd 2000, we won't be publishing any new AAA texts, organising events or producing Annual Reports. John Eden will also shortly be unsubscribing from the AAA-list and turning over its admin to... somebody or nobody.

*Space travel's in my blood,
There ain't nothing I can do about it.*

*Long journeys wear me out,
but I know I can't live without it.*

The Only Ones

There is a risk of the AAA falling into situations of endlessly repeating only the most basic ideas associated with the network. This could become unsatisfying and can lead to viewing one's own involvement in a similar fashion to a job or membership of a political organisation. It also communicates a degree of boredom to whoever is on the receiving end. We don't want to answer the same questions over and over again.

For this reason it may be useful for all autonomous astronauts to consider their position. We have decided to only involve ourselves with the organisation of historification projects (including the continuing availability of "classic" AAA merchandise) and only this for as long as it appeals to us—which certainly won't be for 333 days*. The process of historification is one step removed from the 'operational' level and therefore has the advantage of allowing autonomous astronauts to place outrageous contexts or explanations on the basic ideas behind the five-year plan.

I'm so bored of the AAA
The Clash

There is also the danger of an AAA bureaucracy emerging—of becoming the

sort of organisation that asks George Soros for £333,000 (even in jest), or that gets nearly approving mentions in anarchist magazines like *Organise* in their J18 write ups, or that allows a couple of individuals to get wheeled out for the media every time something vaguely arty gets done about outer space.

Above all there is the danger of veteran autonomous astronauts being perceived as experts—nudging closer to the space establishment (corporate or governmental attempts to make space travel more open, media science commentators, the British Interplanetary Society, etc) than the people who are the AAA's natural constituency.

We would like to take up Disconaut AAA's proposal that we dissolve ourselves into a wider group of people. We should at all costs avoid ghettoisation—the creation of a niche AAA category. Perhaps we should instead concentrate on infecting other categories so that there is no longer a need for a specific AAA network. Indeed, it should now be the primary focus of all autonomous astronauts to create a situation where the AAA is no longer necessary.

This is by no means the end. Just as our previous projects have overtly and covertly been present in our AAA activities—the ideas, experiences, and relationships that

we unearthed whilst part of the AAA will surely continue to be present in what we do as groups and as individuals in the future.

See You In Space
Raido AAA

* Whilst we understand Mr Balli's ideas about the AAA being a self-initiatory process in which people may have to immerse themselves for a specific length of time to reap the rewards, we are unclear as to how setting another discrete length of time with a fixed endpoint will resolve the "problem" of people becoming involved some time after the beginning of the five-year plan.

We would also urge caution to people who wish to immerse themselves in a project which is numerologically identical to the archdemon Choronzon, who in our experience is a far from benign influence.

This text isn't an attempt to rubbish the ideas behind the extension (or to have a go a younger AAA groups or autonomous astronauts)—it's more an explanation of why we don't wish to participate—and perhaps an attempt to generate some discussion!

333

"333" is a transversalist concept that moves in several directions at once. In this text we're going to explore some of the main directions in which the "333" moves.

direction S

333 as the number of days in which AAA Bologna plans to extend the AAA Five Year Plan after its end on April the 23rd year 2000. The reason for such an extension has to be found in what we feel as a fundamental need: the launch on April the 23rd year 2000 of what we call a process of self-historification that will radically deny any possible historisation coming from "outside" of our activities as autonomous astronauts. During this 333 days extension, every AAA group will be invited to come up with its own self-historification project and, in doing so, a radical resistance towards the working unities of historisation will be expressed. Self-historification in fact has been proved to be the most effective anti-historisation technique.

direction E

333 as the title of the science-fiction novel AAA Bologna is writing together with Mr.

Gerard Z* (1) that intends to be, between other things, a sort of personal historification of the AAA from the future. A direct consequence of direction S.

direction L

333 as the number of launchpads for independent space exploration the Association of Autonomous Astronauts have been locating on Planet Earth. From the Inner City AAA's in Grub Street (now called Milton Street) to Oceania AAA's on One Tree Hill. Plus to mention AAA Trento's one at the anti-gravitational site of Montagnaga on the Alps where bizarre phenomena of resistance to gravity as a social law constantly happen. And the AAA Lucca's one in Tuscany in Piazza dell'Anfiteatro that is an elliptical square built on a Roman ancient amphitheatre perimeter situated in the heart of the Lucca historical centre. Piazza dell'Anfiteatro has three medieval gates that you necessarily have to pass through if you want to get to the square, and looks like a perfect pitch for a three-sided football match.

direction F

333 as the number of days in which AAA Bologna plans to extend the AAA Five Year Plan in order to produce an "AAA Rave in

Space" CD.

direction H

3:33 pm as the perfect time for a psychic attack against Nasa.

direction I

333 as the thousands of pounds AAA Bologna intends officially asking Mr. George Soros for as a financial backing for AAA's independent space exploration programmes.

direction S

333 as the number of days in which AAA Bologna plans to extend the AAA Five Year Plan. This extension will prolong the autonomous astronauts adventures until March the 21st 2001, date of the first Anti-Gravitational Spring Equinox.

direction T

333 as the number of minutes that every three-sided football match lasts for (or at least I think so, I'm not that sure about it...)

direction O

333 as the number that every group joining the 333 days extension to the Five Year Plan is invited to insert in between its name. For example, AAA Bologna will become AAA

"333" Bologna.

direction R

33.3 as the angle in degrees at which a spaceship must enter earth's atmosphere to avoid burn-out.

direction I

3.33 am as another perfect time for a psychic attack against Nasa!

direction F

333 as the number of days AAA Utrecht is going to exist for...(to contact "Jungle" AAA Utrecht: jungleAAA@hotmail.com);

direction Y

333 as the number of e-z steps you have to go through (according to AAA Bologna) to build your own spaceship.

direction ! SELF-HISTORIFY!

Riccardo Balli
(AAA Bologna)

note:

1 Gerard Z is a freelance occultist from London, now a member of AAA Bologna.

Details of "333" activity can be found at <http://www.echodesign.net/mattia/333/>

The Final Declaration

23/04/00

The Association of Autonomous Astronauts (AAA) has arrived at the climax of its five-year plan. We have now successfully established a world-wide network of local, community-based groups dedicated to building their own spaceships.

On April 23rd 2000, which marks the fifth anniversary of the official launch of our independent space exploration programme, the AAA will spontaneously dissolve itself in order to initiate a new phase of self-historification. We will enter the realm of myth, an inspiration for the Next Generation of space explorers. Those who wish to engage with the possibilities that open up when we leave this world behind can now utilise the diverse experiences of the participants in the AAA project.

The AAA evolved into a social movement that developed a complex toolbox of techniques for exploring the new social relations that are created by autonomous communities in space. *These tools can be*

used by anyone.

This is a momentous occasion for the history of human space exploration. The AAA legacy will be the indisputable fact that the state, corporate, and military monopoly of space travel has been destroyed forever.

SEE YOU IN SPACE



ARDENT PRESS PRESENTS

IS SPACE THE PLACE?



Yes